Photo Bassano.

That man who vows he'll never fall in love,
And kisses does disdain,
Has but to gaze upon the face above,
To know his boast is vain.

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"I SENT A LETTER TO MY LOVE."
From the Painting by A. J. Elsley.

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MY·FAVOURITE·PHOTOGRAPH

An Unique Gallery of the Favourite Photographs of Eight Stage Favourites.

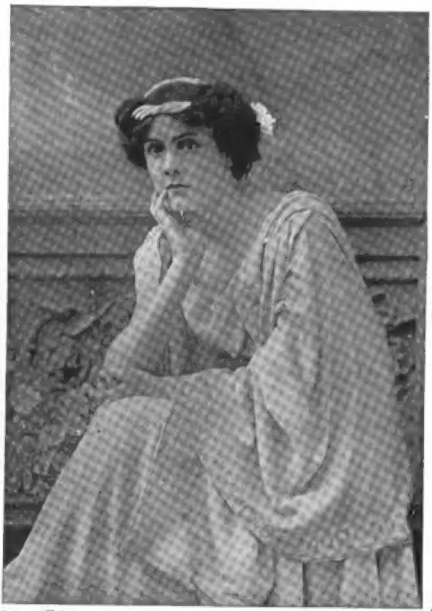

Photo Ellis & Walery.

LILY BRAYTON.

The Lovely Shakespearean Actress.

This is a photograph of beautiful Miss Lily Brayton as she appears in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." She names it as her favourite.

Miss Brayton's experiences of photographers are pleasant. "I have always found them an affable and obliging class of men," she says, "and, nowadays, they make things very comfortable for me." Her first photo was taken in babyhood, and her second not until she was sixteen.

Miss Brayton has achieved many a triumph in Shakespearean parts, but the ambition of her life is still to be realised—she longs to play Rosalind.

One of her favourite recreations is watching her husband (Mr. Oscar Asche) play golf.

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

CONSTANCE COLLIER

The Ever-Popular Leading Lady at His Majesty's Theatre.

Strange is it not that a beautiful woman should dislike being photographed? But that is the case with Miss Constance Collier.

"I am nervous at the slightest reference to my features," she says, "and feel very uncomfortable in front of a camera."

She prefers this photo to her others on account of the quaint headdress she is wearing.

Quite recently Miss Collier was married to Mr. Julian Lestrange, the well-known Shakespearean actor and nephew of Fitzgerald, the translator of "Omar Khayyam."

Neither bride nor bridegroom could spare more than a few minutes for the ceremony. The wedding-dress had actually to be pinned together, and Mr. Lestrange contented himself with a pair of new gloves.

A flying visit to the Registrar's, a little lunch at a favourite restaurant—and then back to their respective tasks!

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Photo. Fellows Wallace.

LILIAN BRAITHWAITE.

A Beautiful Comedy Actress.

It is seldom that Nature bestows so many gifts on one individual as she has given Miss Lilian Braithwaite. A beautiful classic contour, a sweetly sympathetic voice, and a subtle charm of manner have won for Miss Braithwaite many admirers.

Her beauty of outline and expression are well caught in the photograph she has selected as her favourite. Possibly her fascinating demureness may be traced to the fact that for generations back hers has been a Quaker family.

She showed her abilities as an actress while with Mr. Benson's Company, being intrusted with many important rôles while still in her teens.

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Photo Draycott Gallerie.

CAMILLE CLIFFORD.

The Beautiful "Gibson Girl."

Miss Camille Clifford's chief reason for preferring this photograph to her numerous others, is that "the Gollywog is just too 'cute for anything." She is essentially an "outdoor girl." She rides in the Row every day, swims, skates, and plays tennis, and, in fact, is devoted to all games except hockey, which she considers rough.

"In the States," she says, "I just love ski-running, but, of course, that's out of the question here in England."

Miss Clifford would certainly convert anyone to the gospel of games, for she looks radiantly healthy, and enjoys life thoroughly. "Please say," she pleaded, "that I love England and *adore* London."

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Photo. Ellis & Walery.

GERTIE MILLAR.

The Charming Gaiety Actress.

When one has hundreds of photos to select from it is hard to give an answer to "which is your favourite?" Miss Gertie Millar, however, expresses a preference for this one with little "Ranee of Bhong" upon her shoulder.

Miss Millar's relations with photographers were not always pleasant.

"Soon after I came to London I was asked to sit, and the photographer promised to send me proofs. I never got the proofs, but shortly after I heard the photographs were out on postcards—hideous things—and when I wrote to protest I got back quite a rude letter!"

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Photo *Lallie Charles.*

ETHEL MATTHEWS.

A Well-known Stage Beauty.

Miss Ethel Matthews compares going to be photographed with a visit to the dentist. But however painful the process may be, it is justified in this, her favourite photo.

Miss Matthews is a lady with tastes out of the common run. She has an extraordinary dislike for the sight of a cork, and her explanation is that it is as abhorrent to her as a pair of silk gloves. Rather cryptic, is she not?

She is an excellent shot, and enjoys nothing better than a day out with the guns. She thinks live pigeon shooting cruel, and contents herself with clay pigeons.

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Lallie Charles.

GAYNOR ROWLANDS.

One of the Pillars of the Gaiety.

Very sweet and demure is Miss Gaynor Rowlands in the photograph of her choice. In Miss Rowlands' opinion its success is due to the fact that it was taken by a woman.

"It takes a woman to understand a woman," she says, "and one must be known and understood before one can be properly photographed."

Nothing annoys Miss Rowlands more than to be "arranged" by the photographer. She prefers to do the "arranging" herself.

She has a beautiful home at St. John's Wood, rich in tiger rugs, and costly lovely, things, a squirrel, a parrot that speaks Russian, and a Siamese cat.

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Photo *Bassano.*

PHYLLIS DARE.

London's Youngest Leading Lady.

Little Miss Phyllis Dare makes a very pretty photo. But she is more beloved by photographers than they are by her. On an average she has to go to the studio about once a week, and she finds it tiring and uninteresting.

"There is nothing to amuse me while I am waiting," she complains, "and sometimes I have to change my costume six times, and if the photos do not turn out well, it has all to be gone through again."

Poor Miss Phyllis! there are penalties even in fame.

She is not a very keen reader. She seldom finishes a book she begins, or troubles to remember very much of what she has read.

She loves the stage, and will live nowhere but in London.

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THE ELECTION OF MISS SOPHINISBA

The Story of a Feminine Victory.

By Catherine Adams.

I had never seen my aunt, Miss Sophinisba March, angry before. Now I was considerably startled to see her blue eyes flashing, and her colour coming and going like any young girl's.

"It is monstrous!" she cried, and her usually even tones thrilled with emotion.

"I knew you would sympathise," said the Vicar.

"I do; indeed I do."

"I knew how much the Ladies' Committee had this matter at heart; you especially, Miss Sophinisba, so I have come straight to you from the squire."

"I shall hate the man!" said my aunt, almost vindictively.

"Ah! you must not say that," said the peace-loving cleric; "and we must make allowances. Remember, Mr. Crookherne has been an Indian judge for years, and most Indian officials acquire very autocratic manners."

"He ought to remember that England is not India. By the by, what was his name before he came into the property, Mr. Mostyn?"

"Beyond the fact that he is the late squire's cousin, and that the change of names was obligatory on his succession to the estates, I know nothing. But about this matter of the old folks at the workhouse. Are we to give in to the new squire?"

"Most certainly not! He is a stranger here, and he knows nothing of the needs of our people. Tell me exactly what he said."

"He was quite rude," said Mr. Mostyn in deprecatory tones; "he said he understood that there was too much petticoat government as regards the poorhouse. He believed that the board of guardians was evidently ruled by this same feminine element, and he intended to do his best to alter the existing state of things. As for the proposed new rule of allowing the aged couples to be together instead of separating them as before, he designated it as ridiculous. He meant to do his best to prevent its being carried. You have heard, of course, that Mr. Stringer is leaving the neighbourhood, and the squire means to take his place on the board, unless ——" The vicar paused abruptly.

"Yes, unless?" queried my aunt anxiously.

"Unless we can find someone of sufficient influence to oppose him."

"But there is no one," cried Miss Sophinisba sorrowfully.

"Yes, dear lady, there is someone—yourself!"

"I!" My aunt had been standing; now she collapsed on the sofa.

"Why not?" said Mr. Mostyn softly. "You are nearly as large a landholder as the squire; the people know you and love you. You are far better fitted to represent their interests than Mr. Crookherne is."

"But the position—*so* unfeminine!" Miss Sophinisba spoke from the bottom of her dear, old-fashioned heart.

"Not at all. We are very much behind the times here. For years other parishes have had ladies on their respective boards of guardians."

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"But I—I don't like it. I am quite old-fashioned, possibly, but to me the idea of publicity for women is hateful."

The vicar sighed ostentatiously.

"Then, I suppose, we must give it up; and the poor old couples in the Union—it will be rather hard on them after raising their hopes so much—yes, the poor old things must remain apart in their declining years."

"Oh," sighed my aunt, "it will be horrid. I shall have to uproot all my most delicate instincts—but I suppose I must!" Then she recovered grandly. "Mr. Mostyn, I will put self aside, I will stand. *Yes; I mean to stand, and fight the squire!*"

* * * * *

And that was exactly how the election came about, that memorable election of a Poor Law guardian for the parish of Wintersloe, and to which same election the Parliamentary campaigns were comparatively as water to wine for intense interest and hard fighting.

Within a week we were in the thick of it. Aunt Sophinisba, urged by the Vicar and her troops of friends, got her address to the electors issued as quickly as possible. In an indirect way (Aunt Sophy's maid's brother is footman at the Hall) we heard that the squire was *furious* when he heard that he was to be opposed by a lady.

We also heard that all the cottagers on that part of his land which lay in the parish of Wintersloe were arbitrarily ordered to vote for their landlord.

How different was Miss Sophinisba's method! In her own sweet way she told her tenants her reasons for seeking election, but she hoped they would vote exactly as they thought right. She did not wish to coerce them in any way.

Then came the meeting at the parish room, when Aunt Sophy was to address the electors for the first time. Poor soul, she was nearly dead with fright at such an ordeal. When the carriage was announced as being ready to take us to the meeting, she turned to me piteously:

"Molly, I *can't* go!"

"Yes, you can, and will, dear," I said heroically—though, truth to tell, I was enduring a fine fit of nerves myself on her behalf. "You will do just splendidly—when once you are warmed to it. Yes, that's it, warm to your subject, think of the poor old folks at home—I mean at the Union—and forget yourself, sink your own identity entirely! Rise to the occasion nobly."

This was not quite original advice, as I had heard my brother bolstered up with similar expressions when he was quaking at the idea of his first public speech. But the little trite sentences served their purpose, and did Aunt Sophy a power of good. She did rise nobly to the occasion, and she scored a triumph that night.

The ice of her natural reserve once broken, she went on beautifully, and, in all, she addressed seven different meetings, with similar success.

All her friends were elated, and prophesied an overwhelming majority. As for me, I was as exuberant and triumphant as a high-spirited young woman could well be.

Then something happened! Something that affected me very personally, and yet, I was convinced, would prove to be a determining factor in the forthcoming election. This was the sudden appearance in our midst of Jack Willoughby.

I was out one morning on a canvassing errand to an isolated cottage on the outskirts of the parish, and part of my way was by a path skirting Squire Crookherne's park, the boundary line between the two properties being a lichen-covered fence.

Suddenly, as I passed a bend in the path, I noticed the figure of a man leaning on the squire's side of the palings. He had his back to me, but there was something in the shape of his shoulders and the set of his head that caused me to jump as if I had been shot.

"Oh!" I said involuntarily, but so softly I am sure he could not have heard me. But he turned immediately, and there was Jack!

"*Molly!* by all that's splendid."

"How do you do?" I said demurely. We shook hands gravely over the fence.

"This is a surprise," he went on.

"Really?"

"Of course, I'd no idea you were in this neighbourhood." Perhaps my face expressed incredulity. "It is true, really," he said. "I had no intention of disobeying you. You told me not to approach you in any way for three whole months, and I am perfectly aware that the time is not up yet."

Perhaps I ought to explain here that Jack had proposed to me two months earlier at a country house in Scotland. I had asked for three months in which to consider the question.

"You've not forgotten, surely?" he asked earnestly.

No, I had not forgotten; indeed, I had been much engrossed by this sweet dalliance between "shall I? or shall I not?" until the

excitement of the election had intervened and driven the question off a little.

"I told you I was coming south to stay with a relative," I said reproachfully.

"Hampshire is not the only southern county," said Jack laconically.

"I'm staying with Aunt Sophinisba." Then a brilliant idea came. "Oh, Jack—I mean Mr. Willoughby—you must help us, that is Aunt Sophy and me. We're awfully hard at work electioneering. You will be such an acquisition to our forces; we need a man badly for some of the work. It is such great fun, too. Aunt Sophy is opposing the squire."

"Oh, I say!" Jack's face turned gloomy. "Is your aunt Miss March?"

"Of course," I said impatiently, "and as for the squire, he is a cross-grained, hateful——"

"I must not listen to this," he said gravely, "because, you see, the squire happens to be my uncle."

"Oh!" A plunge into icy cold water was nothing to the feeling that ran all up my spine and into the roots of my hair. It got into my voice. "We are on different sides," I said coldly.

"That is soon mended," and he vaulted quickly over the palings. "Now, Molly, little darling, this is not going to make the slightest difference to you and me; our—our friendship——"

"Acquaintance," I corrected loftily.

"It must not interfere with us. I am here at my uncle's request to help him, and you, of course, are pledged to help your aunt. But that such a twopenny-halfpenny election should come between *us*, why, it is too absurd!"

"It's not a twopenny-halfpenny affair," I cried hotly. "It is a struggle, a memorable struggle, for a great principle. It resolves itself into the truly awful question of parting, in their declining years, those who have all their lives been together."

Jack's face fell. "You don't mean to say that you have got turned into one of those female spouters who——"

"No," I said sharply, "but if by such a choice expression you allude to my aunt, why then she *does* spout, and it would do you good to hear her. But it is a great cause—a sacred cause, that she is engaged in. How would you like," I continued rapidly, "how would you like, after living for years and years with the wife of your choice, in joy and sorrow, sunshine and rain, how, when adversity came, and you had perforce to go to the poorhouse, would you like to be parted then from the dear companion of your heart?"

"I just would not stand it," said Jack stubbly.

"There! now I have convinced you, and you'll tell the squire that you see the error of his principles, and that Aunt Sophinisba's is a just cause."

"I am afraid that is impossible. I have already promised the old man, and he has been very good to me always."

"But you promised in ignorance."

"It is not to be done. I've given my word. I am awfully sorry about this, but, indeed, it need not make any difference between you and me, dear. Promise!"

"I promise nothing. I am heart and soul with Aunt Sophy, and I hope she will beat the squire. Good-morning."

I steeled my heart to the imploring look in Jack's eyes. My own eyes felt like icicles. I suppose tears do go that way sometimes, although I had hitherto only known of them in love-songs. Anyhow, a thaw succeeds a frost, and directly I reached home and could hide myself in my own room I thawed rapidly. I cried as if my heart would break.

After this I tried to avoid going to those cottagers who were looked upon as outsiders—that is, those who were not tenants of either candidate—for fear of meeting Jack Willoughby.

But one day the vicar called in great perturbation.

"Miss Sophinisba, I do not wish to damp you in the least, but there is a new element to confront. The squire's nephew is here, and the young man is likely to prove a trump card as far as his uncle's election is concerned. He is handsome and fascinating, and I hear that the women are flocking to his standard. Numbers of the men, who are already pledged to vote for yourself, are having rather a bad time of it. Some will hold their own, but the weaker will give in to their wives—Jukes, for instance. Miss Molly, you really must tackle Mrs. Jukes, or her husband will secede."

I felt that my private feelings must not be allowed to interfere with the cause. I spoke up valiantly.

"Mr. Mostyn, I will go and talk to Mrs. Jukes at once."

I rode on my bicycle to the Jukes' cottage. I propped up my machine against the fence, and without the least misgiving I knocked at the door.

"Come in," called Mrs. Jukes from within,

and I walked straight into the lion's mouth. There sat Jack in a low chair, nursing Mrs. Jukes' youngest on his knee. I must say that though it was an extremely foolish position for a man to be caught in, he did not appear to think so. He rose quietly, and shifting the child on to his left arm, he held out his hand. I ignored it.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Jukes," I said. "I did not know you were engaged. I will come some other time."

Jack promptly put down the little Jukes on the floor.

"Please don't go away; I am just going," he said.

"There's no need for either of you to go, miss," said Mrs. Jukes. "And really, miss, I'd be glad for you to be hearing what the gentleman has been telling me about his uncle, who is not so black as some folks would have us believe." There was a defiant look in her eye.

"But Mr. Jukes has already promised his vote to my aunt," I said quickly.

"Jukes, begging your pardon, miss, is a fool. A pretty face and a winning tongue, and there—he don't know where he are. Jukes votes as *I* wish." She eyed me sternly, with arms akimbo.

"If Mr. Jukes has already promised his vote, I am sorry I called," said Jack. "You did not tell me this, Mrs. Jukes."

"No, sir. I am always willing to hear both sides of a question, and on your own showing, there are some couples as 'ud be real glad to get the chance of being parted, without the trouble and expense of a funeral."

For the first time Jack looked a little uncomfortable at this exposition of his views, as propounded by Mrs. Jukes.

"Then it is a great pity that those couples should ever have come together," I said hotly. "I am not very old, Mrs. Jukes, but I hope I should have more discrimination than to marry *anyone* with such terrible views." I felt I had scored there as regarded Jack.

"Bless you, miss, with your face and figure you can pick and choose where and when you will; but every woman ain't so lucky; we've got to take what comes."

There was no answering this philosophy, but I had a parting shot left. "In the circumstances, Mrs. Jukes, I suppose you will no longer care to have work from the Manor House?" Mrs. Jukes was a good needlewoman, and Miss Sophinisba was one of her most constant customers. I was ashamed of this bit of feminine spleen directly the words had left my lips, and when I saw the surprised, grieved look on Jack's face, I would have given much to recall them. I was daggers drawn with him, but that was no reason why I should not still have his good opinion.

"Oh, certainly not, miss, in the circumstances," retorted Mrs. Jukes.

"I beg your pardon; I spoke hastily, and not at all as Aunt Sophy would wish. You may be sure that, however Mr. Jukes gives his vote, the work will be sent just as before."

Then I left the cottage hastily. As I rode back home I met Jukes. I told him sorrowfully that I had heard that he was likely to back out of his promise to Miss Sophinisba.

"Well, miss, my missus 'ave set 'er 'ear on my voting for the squire, all on account of the young one; 'e've got a very winning tongue, specially with the wimmin."

Though I did not say so, I agreed with this remark, and I resolved that the same winning tongue should have no effect on me.

"Also," continued Jukes, "I ain't quite sure in my own mind as to what is best for th' old folks up at the workhouse—to be together, or not to be together."

"Why, surely, there's no question at all. Of course, they would just love to be together," I urged.

"Speakin' for the men, miss, I make so bold as to differ. I've got a good missus, none better, but there *are* times—if you was a married man, miss, you'd understand; but, in course, being a woman, or, I should say, a young lady, why, you can't! But you may take my word for it, there are times when a man would like to be—"—he looked fearfully around, then, putting his hand to his mouth with an air of secrecy, whispered—"alone! quite free!"

Remembering the attitude of Mrs. Jukes, I could not honestly rebuke him.

Three days after this interview with Jukes the election took place, and WE WON!

Aunt Sophinisba beat the squire by thirty-seven votes. What a supreme moment was that in which the numbers were announced! And what a shouting and cheering arose from the crowd without the Parish Hall! It was a wonderful sight to see those sturdy labourers, Aunt Sophy's own tenants, take the horses from the carriage and draw us home in triumph. Then, at the Manor House, Aunt Sophy made them a little speech, thanking them for their votes, and giving them such sweet advice with regard to their homes and families. Superintendent Gillow said later that this speech had a most moral effect, for

he never remembered a period in which he received such few complaints of wife-beating as in the time immediately following the election.

The very next morning Jack called. I was awfully astonished, and felt quite shy when I introduced him to Aunt Sophy. He congratulated her so charmingly that she took to him on the spot, and I fancy she began to suspect our little romance. Victory achieved, I could afford to be magnanimous, and was quite nice to Jack. Still, I tried to let him see that I had not forgotten his attitude during the election.

His straightforward manner soon won Aunt Sophy's confidence, and I caught her watching him pensively several times.

"You remind me so much of someone I knew many years ago," she said, and then she sighed.

"I am supposed to be like what my uncle was at the same age," smiled Jack. "Have you seen him?"

"Only at a distance as yet. I could not very well call, as we are a feminine household, and now —" she smiled quaintly at Jack.

"And now you imagine he will not care to call after such a defeat?"

"I am afraid not. But I shall be sorry, for we are a friendly neighbourhood."

"I mean to try to work the oracle, and see what I can do," said Jack.

He tried hard, I believe, and I could not help feeling that it was as much on his own account as on Aunt Sophinisba's that he urged his uncle to be friendly. But it was useless. The squire had been beaten by a petticoat, and he considered the position to be already sufficiently detestable.

Jack went away after a little. He was too independent to let his love affair be subject to his uncle's decision, though, being his heir, he would naturally wish to please him, but he must have his own way in this matter —that is, his own way so far as it coincided with the way of a certain wilful young woman. This much I gathered from a letter he sent me, a letter in which I was reminded that the period of his probation was nearing its end, and then he would come to Wintersloe once more for a final answer.

As I rode back home I met Jukes.

It was about a fortnight after the election when Mr. Mostyn called one morning with an amused look on his face.

"I have some news I am afraid you will not appreciate, and yet it is really rather amusing. The squire will get his wish fulfilled after all. Mr. Thwaites has resigned and so Mr. Crookherne — there is absolutely no one else—will just walk over the course, and become a member of the board."

"Oh," said my aunt timorously, "it will be very awkward."

"A little, perhaps, but you *are* on the board, and I anticipate that you will carry the day easily."

There was no doubt that the next meeting to be held by the guardians would be a notable one, for the hero and heroine of the most exciting election ever known in Wintersloe would make their first appearances simultaneously. Also, the proposed new rule, aptly described by Jukes as—To be, or not to be divided—was to be discussed most freely, and, if possible, passed.

In vain I bolstered up Aunt Sophy's vanity as the day drew near, though I reiterated the fact

that she had been most emphatically chosen by a large majority, while the squire had literally crawled in as best he could, the poor lady guardian was in a great fright of the man she had beaten.

I dressed her myself for the event, and in spite of her fifty years she looked too sweet for anything. Though her hair had turned grey it was still luxuriant, and there were pretty little short bits that curled naturally round her temples, giving her quite a youthful appearance; many a maiden would have envied her fresh complexion and slim figure.

As I eyed her critically, I could not help exclaiming:

"I can't understand why no one ever married you. But I am sure you were to blame, not the men." She smiled a little wistfully.

"Mr. Right never came, my dear, at least, he——" She pulled herself together abruptly. "It is time to start, Molly."

Arrived at the workhouse, there was some little time to spare before the meeting. Miss Sophinisba utilised these spare minutes in visiting one of the sick wards, while I interviewed the matron on my own account.

"Why, of course, it could be managed," said the matron good-naturedly, when I had confided my desire to her in an aside. "Come with me."

One end of the board-room was partitioned off by means of some large screens; there was a second door leading to the screened-off part, and here the matron established me comfortably.

"You will be able to hear your aunt's speech quite well, and if you want to peep, there is a small hole in the canvas there."

A few minutes later the murmur of voices warned me that the guardians were assembling. I could hear Aunt Sophy being introduced by the chairman to one or two members with whom she was not acquainted. Then came the turn of Squire Crookherne. As luck had it, my peephole focussed the chairman's end of the long table, and as he had Aunt Sophy on his right and the squire was exactly opposite her, I had a fine view of the two people I most wished to see. As the chairman murmured their respective names Miss Sophinisba bowed gravely, but with her usual grace. As for Mr. Crookherne, he just clicked his heels together, military fashion, and gave a curt little bow, without so much as a glance at the lady's face. But I had no idea the man was so handsome; he looked exactly like what Jack might look thirty years later, only sterner.

After a tedious preamble of dry preliminaries the real business of the day began, and the crucial question of the separation of the old couples came on for discussion. As the chairman introduced the subject which was so near Miss Sophinisba's heart, I could see her colour rise and her eyes sparkle. I augured well from these signs, for they showed that she was warming to the coming fray.

As the chairman finished his remarks, which were diplomatically vague, neither for nor against, he looked at Aunt Sophy encouragingly, expecting her to take up the cudgels on behalf of her pet scheme, but before she could open her lips the squire was on his feet expounding his views hurriedly. I believe he was afraid to let Miss Sophinisba have the first innings, fearing the effect of her speech on the others. I was obliged to confess that he could speak very well, but the callous manner in which he alluded to the bonds of holy matrimony made my blood boil, and I felt that he could not but be a very bad associate for Jack.

The squire used very much the same argument as that employed by Jukes, maintaining that a man and his wife would welcome a little respite from each other's society. A few horrid chuckles, and "hear, hear!" from one of the guardians, punctuated this part of the speech. As it well happened, however, this direct attack had the happy effect of inciting Miss Sophinisba to her best endeavours, and when the squire sat down she got up from her place, perfectly regardless of her former fear of him, and absolutely on her mettle.

I could have hugged her, I was so proud of her. She spoke quietly, not showing any of the heat I had expected, but oh! it was beautiful what she said. She spoke of the sanctity of happily married lives, and drew a most pathetic picture of the regrettable existing rule which caused separation at a time when more than ever was needed the mutual support and comfort of such unions.

While listening with all my ears to what Aunt Sophy was saying, I could not help taking an occasional peep at Mr. Crookherne to see how he was taking it. When Aunt Sophy first stood up to speak, he had kept his gaze fixed determinedly on the table; he would not deign to look at the woman who had beaten him at the election. But at the first sound of her voice he gave a little start, and turned his head, as if listening to someone at a distance.

Then he suddenly gave an impatient shake

of his head, and glared across at Aunt Sophy. But the angry glare disappeared as if by magic, though he continued to stare across the table as if he could not look at her enough. I could not have believed that the expression of his face could alter so, for now he looked more like Jack than ever.

As Miss Sophinisba's speech came to an end there was quite an animated clapping of hands and uttering of "bravos," and I understood later that this was most unusual; but the new guardian's simple eloquence had roused the others to enthusiasm. This was satisfactory, but I confess to a shock when I pulled the ponies up quickly. Mr. Crookherne addressed himself to my aunt.

"Have I your permission to call on you to-morrow morning?" As my aunt gave a startled acquiescence he gave her a strange look, thanked her quietly, and, turning his horse's head, trotted off briskly in the direction of the Hall.

I believe I was as nervous as Aunt Sophy, which is saying a great deal, when next morning the time drew near for the squire's appearance. With the egotism of youth I had come to the conclusion that the visit must be in connection with Jack and myself,

As we drove home . . . the squire's cob overtook us.

saw the squire rise gravely and heard him say in a voice totally different from the rasping tones of his first speech:

"Miss March, I beg to thank you for enlightening my ignorance of the question before us, and I also apologise for intruding my views, which I now see were quite erroneous and prejudiced, before I had heard your more enlightened and charitable convictions."

What a victory! I could scarcely believe it, and, indeed, it all seemed like a dream.

This impression gained on me as we drove home, for the squire's cob overtook us, and in obedience to a gesture from his rider I

but directly Mr. Crookherne entered the room I saw my mistake. When Aunt Sophy introduced us he gave me the most casual glance, and then, I verily believe, forgot my presence utterly.

"You did not recognise me yesterday," he said to Aunt Sophy; "do you recognise me now?"

"I have met your nephew," said Aunt Sophy, a little confusedly, "and I fancied that he reminded me of someone I met years ago, but it could not have been you, Mr. Crookherne."

"How I must have changed! You do not remember Dick Tressady?"

"Oh!" Aunt Sophinisba put up her

pretty hands convulsively. "Oh," she cried again. There was no doubt that the memory of Dick Tressady was a painful one.

"How Miss Madge Lyster comes to be Miss Sophinisba March I do not know," said the squire interrogatively.

"Madge was the first and pet name of my youth; as I grew older, my second name of Sophinisba seemed more appropriate," explained Aunt Sophy very tremulously. "As for the difference in my surname, my mother's brother left this property years ago to my family on condition that we assumed the name of March."

"It is surely the most extraordinary coincidence," said the squire, "for in my own case I had to exchange my name of Tressady for——"

"*You*, you are Dick Tressady? How dare you come to me?" She turned on him angrily.

"Dare?" he repeated tempestuously. "You forget, surely. You treated me cruelly enough in that bygone time. You seem to have forgotten. I will go back to that time a little. A girl had two lovers; one had good prospects, the other none. The latter had no right to speak, but he was young and ardent, and he had faith in himself. So, on the very eve of his departure for India, he wrote a letter. Perhaps the girl never had it?"

"Yes," said Aunt Sophy, in a stifled voice, "she had the letter."

"It was a letter calling for an immediate answer. It was a cruel thing to take no notice of such a letter," continued the squire in deep tones; "it—it nearly spoilt a man's life. He took his part fairly enough in the work that came to him later, but the episode hardened his heart, and that is bad for a man, very bad. Look at me, Madge, look at your work!" But she would not look.

"I, too, have suffered," she cried. "I feel it again, the—the agony! for I answered your letter; oh, believe me, I wrote you an answer. I had no need to reflect. I replied at once. I told you—" she stopped abruptly.

"Fate prevented that letter ever reaching me, but I surely have a right to know—tell me, Madge, what was the answer?"

"I said I loved you and would wait for you," she said simply, with downcast eyes and trembling lips.

"Would wait for me," he repeated softly.

"And I did wait, but no news came. I could only think that it had all been a delusion on your part and that you had forgotten me."

"Forgotten you!" he said huskily. "Forgotten you? I have thought of no other woman all these years. I have never married, but I have always pictured you as being happily married. It cannot have been for lack of opportunity," he added admiringly.

"I could not forget," said Aunt Sophy softly.

"Madge!" He was close by her side now, and knelt there chivalrously, trying to read her eyes. "Madge, dearest! Fate has ousted us cruelly of the best years of our lives, but there is time still. We are not so old, dear, you and I, and—and——" He could not finish for emotion, but he lifted her hand to his lips.

"Love is never old," said my aunt in a quivering voice.

Then I crept out on tip-toe and left them. I was half crying, and I suppose that is why I did not see someone coming across the lawn as I made my way out of doors.

I was in Jack's arms before I knew he was near.

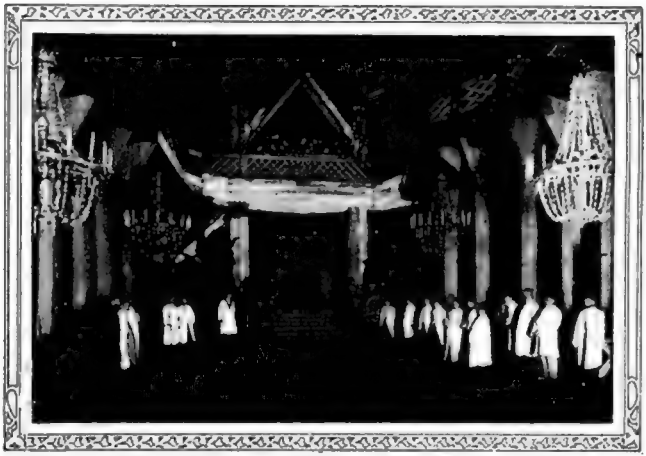
"Molly! It is all right. I came down last night, and my uncle is a brick about our engagement."

"There's going to be a wedding," I cried hysterically.

"I know there is," he said complacently.

"Not ours, silly! *Theirs!*"

Then I told Jack what was likely to be the outcome of Aunt Sophinisba's election.



The Great Letow Ballroom, hewn out of salt. The staircase and statues on either side are of solid salt. The orchestra sits above in the gallery.

The Wonderful Underground City of Salt.

A Description of the Salt Mines at Wieliczka, which are One of the Sights of Austria.

By W. G. Fitz-Gerald.

Surely the most wonderful sight it is possible to witness is the underground world, hewn out of solid rock salt, which the out-of-the-way traveller will be amazed to come across in the obscure little Polish-Austrian town of Wieliczka, five miles or so from Cracow, and the principal centre of the salt industry of Galicia.

The mines are directly controlled by the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Finance, through whom one must obtain permission to enter the salt cities, for, for some unexplained reason, the salt is looked upon as so much gold, even though this whole subterranean world is made of it. The record of these salt mines goes back as far as the eleventh century, and they are miles upon miles in length, and contain hundreds of miles of streets.

The entrance is hardly fairylike or wonderful, consisting of a long, low building above ground, containing the offices of the administration. They showed me here a number of relics belonging to various imperial, royal, and distinguished personages who have at various times descended to inspect the silent and glittering world below. There are uniforms complete and in part belonging to crown princes of the House of Hapsburg, for whom, generations ago, special thrones were carved in solid salt in one of the pits.

One goes down nowadays by an ordinary lift, the old horse-power concern being a thing of the past. The present writer, however, since time was no object, preferred to go down still more gradually by means of the great zigzag staircase hewn in the salt. The first sensation on reaching one or the other of the vast chambers is one almost of terror at the vastness of the saloons, the thick darkness, and the sombre echoes.

One of the first sights shown in the great city is the enormous expanse of the Letow ballroom, which is lit up for the visitor's benefit if he chooses to pay a few shillings.

This enormous ballroom dates back to the early part of the eighteenth century, and is named after Herr Letowski, the then director of the Galician Salt Mines.

I noticed in a kind of recess at the extreme end of the great ballroom a rude but massive throne of greenish salt, which gave out certain flashes of ruby red from its deep crystals.

"This is the throne of the Emperor Franz Josef," they told me, "whenever he comes to the mines."

I asked, as we left the ballroom, how far we were from the surface of the earth.

"About two hundred and twenty feet," my guide replied. "And this tier is the first of the seven cities of our underground world of salt."

But only three of these levels are opened to visitors, for the other sections contain few or none of the wonders pictured in our photographs. The two principal "cities" are "Kaiser Franz" and "Erzherzog Albrecht."

Bidding a party of men advance ahead of us with flaming pine torches and bunches of magnesium ribbon, my guide led the way into the Church of St. Anthony, hewn in the seventeenth century, and resorted to by thousands of pilgrims, not only mine workers, but also "from the earth," as my informant said quaintly.

They told me that on the third of July a Mass was celebrated with especial pomp and ceremony, the priests descending in gorgeous vestments of cloth of gold, attended by thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the country, who on this day, above all others in the year, receive special permission to descend into the bowels of the earth to worship in the cathedral of the City of Salt.

Another great festival is the eighteenth of August, the birthday of the Emperor, when the praises of that venerable monarch are sung by the miners, whose deep voices echo and re-echo through the long, twisting corridors of salt in a way that one can never forget.

As one comes out from the Church of St. Anthony, the guides raise their torches to show a most beautiful shrine and pillared archway, with an altar and colossal crucifix hewn in the flashing salt. Passing along towards the Queen's Chapel, we see innumerable figures of saints praying in rapt ecstasy.

The salt of this subterranean world is curiously durable, as may be seen from the fact that the great chandeliers, though

The railway station on the third floor, or tier, of the mine. The entire structure is carved from salt.

composed of mere strings of salt crystals, have yet endured for centuries without melting or wearing out in any way.

I may say that a tariff for the illumination of the mine is laid down according to rules formulated by the government. The price depends on how many persons are in the party, but what they call a "first-class illumination" would cost about £5. This includes the lighting up of the thousands of candles and electric lamps in all parts of the three "cities" shown, for any number of persons up to twenty. The charge is about £6 for thirty to forty people, but a lesser illumination for from one to ten persons will cost only £2.

In most caverns the guides use Bengal-lights, so that the loftier features of the saloons, chapels, and streets may be seen. To visit the second "city" of this strange world, one descends yet lower by a long series of staircases hewn in the salt. Gradually, as one nears the bottom, the colossal "Michalowice" chamber looms vaguely, with all its appalling mystery. It was finished some time in the eighteenth century, as a result of forty or fifty years of labour. This vast apartment is about one hundred feet broad and one hundred and twenty feet high.

A strange "street" hewn in the solid salt of the underground city.

Having seen this chamber, we enter some smaller saloons, each named after some distinguished personage. Presently one crosses a bridge, and sees two huge pyramids of salt, erected as monuments in 1812 to the then Emperor and Empress of Austria. Each column is inscribed, and the words are lit with electric lights.

Another monument close by commemorates a visit of the Crown Prince Rudolf and the Archduchess Stephanie some twenty years ago. The third tier, or "city," of this strange place contains the railway station and an admirable restaurant, which the present writer, at any rate, was very glad to see, since its long, latticed galleries all among ponderous pillars of salt promised something to eat and drink after the long tramp.

"At this railway station," my guide told me, "some five-and-twenty miles of lines from all parts of the mines meet. We keep the restaurant open all through the summer for the benefit of tourists from Austria, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Germany who come to see us."

As I have said, it would take a visitor weeks adequately to inspect this strange city or series of cities; but who could possibly go away without seeing and navigating the vast subterranean salt lake, which lies no fewer than seven hundred feet below the surface of the earth?

The boat, or barge—one of the few institutions in this strange world which is *not* made of salt—is guided through the various caverns by ropes and pulleys, and the "captain" steers with his feet on another rope.

"There are fifteen or sixteen of these lakes in various parts of the mine," I was told, "but this is the only one which we allow visitors to navigate, for salt masses are apt to drop from the roofs of some of the others."

In about twenty minutes we had completed our tour of the lake.

Then a startling thing occurred.

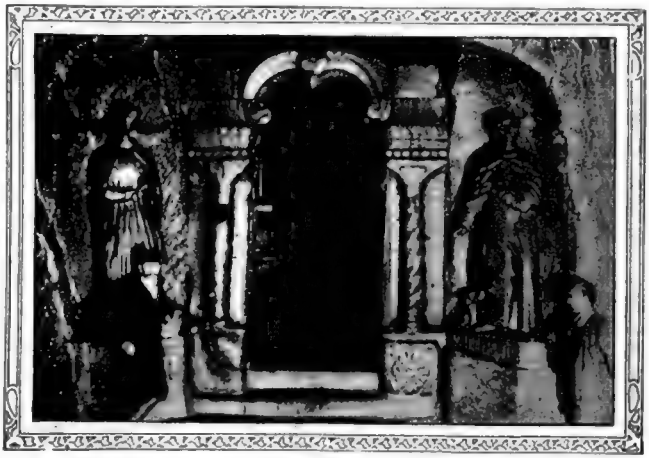
Turning quickly, my guide shot off his revolver, with truly startling effect. I thought the reverberating echoes would never cease, so repeated and repeated were they, each repetition growing more and more remote, until at length the multiplied sounds died away in the immense distance and impenetrable blackness.

Do not think that the inhabitants of this subterranean world have no amusements and entertainments. Sometimes, as we have seen, Royalty will descend into the cities of salt, and music and lights wake the flashing old halls and salt crystals into new life. On the few occasions when the Austrian Emperor himself has favoured the "salt cities" with a visit, the statues, walls, and columns have been smothered with flowers and evergreens, shovelfuls of colour and gem-like salt have been strewn on the floor, and a profusion of flags displayed everywhere.

Altogether there are upwards of twelve hundred miners in the lower "cities" alone, and, each of them working about nine hours a day, they produce one hundred thousand tons of salt every year. They work with somewhat primitive implements, cutting their way laboriously through the solid salt rock, leaving lovely streets and alleys as they go.

I suppose, naturally enough, the authorities are not anxious to talk about the terrible fatalities that have occurred in these cities of salt, but there have been many awful calamities. In the sixteenth century a miner who was getting two or three cents a day for nine hours of terrific labour struck for more pay, and because no notice was taken of him, lit a fire, and smothered no end of his fellows.

A century or so later came another fire, which lasted nearly two years and involved great loss of life.



The vestibule of the Church of St. Anthony. The statues on either side were carved in salt three hundred years ago.

Our Loved Lost Pet

Alas! our sweetest pet has gone,
Our beauty and our pride;
She who was once the light of home
From morn to eventide.

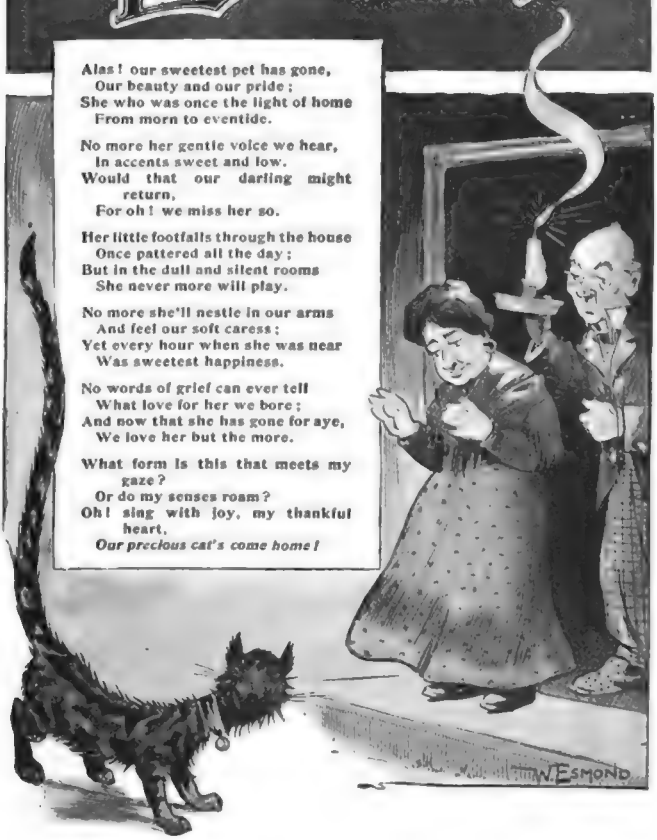
No more her gentle voice we hear,
In accents sweet and low.
Would that our darling might return,
For oh! we miss her so.

Her little footfalls through the house
Once pattered all the day;
But in the dull and silent rooms
She never more will play.

No more she'll nestle in our arms
And feel our soft caress;
Yet every hour when she was near
Was sweetest happiness.

No words of grief can ever tell
What love for her we bore;
And now that she has gone for aye,
We love her but the more.

What form is this that meets my gaze?
Or do my senses roam?
Oh! sing with joy, my thankful heart,
Our precious cat's come home!



By Allen Upward.

This is the Fourth of a New Series of Exciting Ghost Stories. They are entirely Different in Conception from anything of the Kind that has ever been Published before. Each Story is complete in itself.

IV.—THE TWO ROSES.

It would give needless pain to members of the family who are still living in the neighbourhood if I were to go into the circumstances in which the ancient seat of the Hedges, of Essex, came into the market.

It is only necessary to say that the solicitors from whom my firm received instructions to find a purchaser for the estate were not acquainted with the family history, and could tell us nothing definite on the subject of the incidents, real or imaginary, which had given an evil reputation to Bewley Hall.

They were only able to inform us that one entire wing of the building, constituting the most ancient and characteristic portion, had been shut up for a great length of time, so long, indeed, that no one seemed able to remember when it had last been inhabited.

I discussed the matter with Miss Alwyne Sargent, the young lady employed in our office, who had already given me such valuable assistance on similar occasions.

She possessed the gift of clairvoyance and had proved of incalculable assistance in explaining away mysteries connected with several residences.

These were notably the Green House, Wallington, Hailesbury Manor, and Horner's Court.

I had already become well known as a dealer in haunted property, and made a satisfactory profit on my transactions, buying the premises cheap, and selling at a profit when the mysteries were cleared up.

I was reluctant to expose her to the risk of another nervous shock, although she herself was quite eager to take her usual part in our joint investigations. I thought, however, it could do no harm for her to come down with me to make some preliminary inquiries.

None of the furniture and effects had yet been removed from the mansion, and there was a farm bailiff occupying rooms with his family in the servants' quarter, so that it was easy to arrange for a visit.

The rather senseless difficulty of a chaperon for my lady clerk was disposed of by my sister Jane, who surprised me by requesting that she might make one of the party. Jane had not previously met Miss Sargent, but she had heard me speak of her once or twice, and appeared anxious for some reason to make her acquaintance.

I was a little disappointed to find that Alwyne did not seem equally eager to meet my sister. In fact, she went so far as to say that she felt nervous at the prospect. I could only assure her that my sister Jane was a most unassuming, ordinary person, quiet, shrewd, and observant, and, moreover, devoted to me. But this information did not allay Miss Sargent's apprehensions, which seemed to increase as the moment for our departure drew near.

The ceremony of introduction took place on the platform at Liverpool Street. Both ladies, I thought, were more carefully dressed than seemed necessary for a purely business

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journey, on which we were to meet no one of any consequence. I caught a look of surprise on my sister's face as Alwyne came up, and she took the first opportunity to whisper to me, almost in a tone of reproach: "Jack! you never told us she was a beauty!"

"Miss Sargent is a valued member of our clerical staff," I replied severely. "Her looks are no concern of ours so long as they do not interfere with her faithful discharge of her duties in the office."

Jane looked dissatisfied, but she did not venture on any further remark. During the journey down she watched the poor girl as closely as a cat watches a canary bird through the bars of its cage. Fortunately Miss Sargent soon got over her first nervousness, and exerted herself to conciliate my sister with such good effect that by the time we reached Saffron Walden we were all chatting like old friends. Jane rather embarrassed me by forgetting the business relationship between Miss Sargent and myself, and referring to me repeatedly by my Christian name, so that I was rather glad that my partner, Mortimer, was not present.

We found Bewley Hall to be an ancient manor house of the Elizabethan type, built of red brick, which was mellowed by age, and overgrown in many places with ivy and climbing plants. The principal feature was a large and lofty hall, on much the same design as the London Guildhall, but on a smaller scale. It was stone-paved, and was panelled halfway up the walls with very valuable old oak.

The hall, I must explain, separated the two wings or halves composing the mansion. The modern portion, which had been in constant use up to the death of the late owner, had been built on to the great hall at its lower end. The haunted wing, if it should be so called, was connected with the upper end.

Here there was a dais, also paved with stone, stretching from side to side of the hall. The door into the ancient wing opened off one side of the dais, and on the opposite side was another smaller door, like a postern, which we found led into a little rose garden behind the house.

The only other feature that I need dwell on was a gallery, which the bailiff's wife, who showed us over the place, called the musicians' gallery. It overlooked the dais, facing the door into the rose garden, and when we went upstairs we found it was approached by a corridor that traversed the whole length of the haunted wing.

The woman who acted as our guide was very uncommunicative, partly, I believe, because she really had heard very little, and partly because she fancied that she would lower herself in our eyes by betraying any interest in the lore of superstition.

When I asked her if she could tell us anything about the ghost, she tossed her head in disdain.

"I don't know of any ghost," she declared, "and I don't hold with any talk about such things. It's only the labourers that believes in them hereabouts."

The social cleavage thus indicated forbade further inquiry. The bailiff's wife informed us, however, that the disused part of the mansion had been shut up long before she was born, and she made a great deal of difficulty about letting us spend the night in it.

"It's all dust and cobwebs," she explained to me. "Everything there is exactly as it was left a hundred years ago and more, I should say. Your ladies couldn't possibly put up with the dirt and the damp."

We explored the wing under her guidance, and its appearance served to confirm her account. The old hangings clung mouldering to the walls; ancient weapons grown rusty with neglect were suspended along the sides of the corridor; in the bedrooms old four-poster beds were covered with the embroidered quilts of another age, and the robes and brocades of a past generation still filled the closets.

Even my staid and demure sister could not resist the temptation to rummage in some of the cupboards and examine the decayed fineries they contained, while I felt no less strongly attracted by the fine specimens of seventeenth and eighteenth century arms. I found that one superbly mounted pistol which I took down from its place actually had the left barrel still loaded, though the priming had long since disappeared.

Alwyne approached me as I was examining the pistol, and I showed her the flints still in the hammers. She regarded the weapon with peculiar attention, taking it in her hand with a meditative, musing look.

"I wonder how the other barrel came to be discharged," she said.

So far we had been able to glean nothing from the impenetrable obstinacy of our guide. After selecting our rooms, which the woman reluctantly promised to provide with some bedding from the other part of the house, we came back into the great hall.

I have already mentioned the dais which occupied one end, with the two doors opening off it. Across the dais there extended an

ancient table, long and narrow, made of a single beam of oak.

Someone threw out the suggestion that we three should dine at this seigneurial board, in imitation of the olden time.

When I requested the bailiff's wife to make the necessary arrangements, she exhibited some slight dismay.

"Of course it's for you to do as you wish, sir," she said. "But perhaps your ladies don't know that this is the table that has the bloodstain on it."

We seized eagerly upon this allusion.

"What bloodstain?—where?" we demanded, crowding round the black and venerable board.

The woman pointed to the end of the table nearest to the door into the rose garden. Surely enough the wood seemed to have a darker tinge at one particular spot. The mark was about the size of a man's hand.

"Is there a story about this stain?" I asked, hoping to get upon the track of the ghostly legend of the Hall.

But the woman could not, or would not, be drawn.

"It's an old secret in the family, I've heard, how the stain got there. I don't rightly call to mind what it was, but I do think there was a murder in the Hall. Some say it was a hundred years ago, and some two hundred, and the murderer was Sir William Hedges.

"But anyway the table hasn't been used from that day to this, and the family never would have it touched."

Miss Sargent showed herself intensely interested in this account, scanty as it was.

"Who knows that there may not be some sympathetic force concentrated in this particular spot," she said reflectively. "I think that instead of our dining here, and possibly disturbing the magnetism of the table, it will be better for us to try to hold a séance here at night."

Although my recent experiences had cured me of a good deal of scepticism with regard to the occult, I still draw the line at ordinary spirit-rapping. I hinted as much to Alwyne.

"That is not exactly what I meant," she explained. "I am not a medium in that sense. I merely believe it possible that if I can establish a magnetic rapport with this table I may feel some direction given to me which will help us."

My sister, I could see, was a good deal puzzled by this mystic language. In the end, however, Miss Sargent had her way.

We dined and spent the first part of the evening in the modern side of the building, and then adjourned about ten o'clock to the dark and echoing hall.

We placed ourselves round the end of the table, which bore the faded mark of blood, and extinguished the candles we had brought with us. It was a bright moonlight night, and the white rays that streamed in on us through a huge mullioned window filled the hall with shadows that were startling in their distinctness.

Whether because of this brightness, or from any other cause, our sitting had no immediate results. If Miss Sargent were susceptible to any influence, magnetic or otherwise, this was evidently not the right occasion for it.

After a quarter of an hour passed in silence, she rose suddenly from the table with a sigh, and announced her intention of retiring to sleep.

"It is only when I am asleep that I seem to be sensitive," she remarked. "I do not know how it is; this spot fascinates me, and yet if I sat here all night I don't believe anything would happen."

I allowed the two ladies to go upstairs by themselves. The old hall fascinated me by its emptiness and silence, and I paced up and down on the paved floor smoking a cigar, and pondering a certain question which my sister's attitude towards Alwyne had forced me to look in the face.

How long was I going to allow Alwyne Sargent to hazard her nerves, and possibly her brain, in these uncanny experiments? I asked myself the question, no longer as it concerned the clerk in our office on whom I depended, but as it concerned the girl who, stubborn old bachelor as I was, had actually made me think it possible that I might do worse than part with my freedom.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that there was no foolish nonsense in my mind when I thought of Alwyne. I judged her calmly in the light of reason. She appeared to me a good daughter, a good sister, and a thoroughly agreeable companion—in short, an ideal wife for a sensible business man.

I took out of my pocket a rose which she had accidentally dropped in the garden, and which I had picked up, and forgotten to return to her. I was in the act of raising it to my face when suddenly I heard a sigh.

I turned round quickly—I was standing just below the dais at the time—and saw the door of the haunted wing slowly swing open to the width of a couple of feet, as though it were being opened just enough to let

someone through. At the same moment I was conscious of a subtle change in my surroundings, which I can hardly describe, except by saying that I felt as though I had fallen asleep, and awakened again in a different life.

The general aspect of the ancient hall remained the same, and yet somehow everything in it looked slightly less distinct, as though the faintest possible veil had been drawn between me and the objects at which I looked. The moon was not less bright, and the shadows it threw were not less black than before, but nevertheless both light and shadow had become less real, so to speak.

At the same time I was conscious that the change was as much in myself as in the objects round me. I seemed to breathe less vigorously, and to be deprived for a time of the power, or rather of the will, to move or take any part in what was about to happen.

The door opened as far as I have said, and then stopped. I gazed with the most intense curiosity to see who was coming in. But no one appeared. Only I could have sworn that someone or something *had* slipped through that open space, and was gliding softly across the dais towards the end of the table which bore the faded stain.

I turned my eyes, following the course of the unseen visitant, till it had reached the fatal spot. And then, to my astonishment and horror, I did see something. I saw a rose, a rose of the palest yellow or white, lying as if it had just been laid down by an invisible hand, on the exact spot marked by the stain of blood.

I stood still for a few moments, expecting something to follow. Then, as I again turned my eyes in the direction of the door, I saw it close again as gently as it had opened, and without any visible agency. How long I stood in a manner enchanted, gazing from the closed door to the white rose lying on the board, I cannot say. It seemed half-a-minute: it may have been half-an-hour.

Then I was aroused by a sound which clearly belonged to the world of reality. It reached me from above, and on looking up I saw that a figure had appeared in the musicians' gallery, which I have described as overlooking the dais.

I saw a rose, a rose of the palest yellow or white.

At first sight I could have imagined that this figure was only a phantom of the brain, in keeping with the extraordinary illusion which I had just experienced. But as it moved forward to the front of the gallery I recognised that it was Alwyne herself.

She appeared to have come out of her sleeping room, unnoticed by my sister, and to have found her way into the gallery while in that somnambulistic state which I had witnessed on previous occasions. On the way she had assumed a curious disguise, in the shape of a heavy riding cloak, which she must have found among the ancient relics scattered about the old wing.

Clad in this garment she reached the balustrade of the gallery, and peered down at the mysterious rose. She stood like that, in an attitude of the most intent watchfulness, for some minutes. Then I saw her drop suddenly down on the floor of the gallery, concealing herself behind the balustrade, and shrouding all but her face beneath the folds of the cloak.

There was a click, followed by a spark, as the flint of the pistol . . . struck against the rusty pan.

Unable to understand the cause of this singular manœuvre, I gazed round the hall for some change that might account for it. The face of the somnambulist was turned in the direction of the door into the garden. I watched this door steadily, half expecting to see it open as the other door had appeared to do. But this time the spell which had governed my faculties ceased to operate, and I neither saw nor heard anything happen below in the hall.

It was different with the figure crouched in the gallery above. After an interval of time, which must have corresponded closely with that required for someone to enter from the rose garden and make his way to where the rose had been lying, I saw Alwyne rise slowly to her full height, cast aside the thick cloak, and extend her hand in the direction of the fatal spot.

The next instant there was a click, followed by a spark, as the flint of the pistol which she had been grasping struck against the rusty pan. At the same moment her hand loosed the weapon, which fell crashing on the pavement below.

It was the very pistol which I had idly examined in the course of the afternoon!

The noise, or the accomplishment of her purpose, put an end to the sleep-walker's trance. She made a natural movement of surprise, looked all about her, and caught sight of me.

"Where am I? What has happened?" she called out breathlessly.

I told her in a few words what I had seen.

"You came out into the gallery, wearing that cloak, and hid yourself behind the balustrade, after looking at the white rose on the table. Then at the end of a few minutes you stood up and fired in that direction. You have just dropped the pistol on the floor of the hall."

I was startled by Alwyne's response.

"But that rose—the rose on the table—is not white. It is *red*."

I looked, and as surely as I am writing these lines the rose which I had seen lying there white in the moonlight had changed to the colour of blood-red.

Certain by this time that my senses were deceiving me, I made two steps of it to the spot.

The rose had gone! I swept my hand over the place where it had lain as I cried out to Alwyne: "There is nothing here!"

"*I can see it still!*" she replied.

"Come down, for Heaven's sake, or let me come to you; and get a light," I shouted back, thoroughly unnerved.

She moved back slowly from the gallery, first casting the cloak once more about her shoulders. I went and opened the door of the wing, and presently she came in sight, descending the stairs with a lighted lamp.

She passed her hand across her forehead as she observed:

"I am afraid the strain of these experiences is beginning to tell on me. Even now I am hardly sure whether I am awake or asleep."

I led her out on to the dais. This time there was no room for doubt. Neither white rose nor red was any longer there to tease the fancy. The old oak board lay in the moonlight, black and smooth as when we had seen it first.

Late as it was we could not forbear questioning each other as to the experiences of the past half hour. I described to Alwyne what I had seen or imagined, and pressed her to explain her own part in the strange episode.

Unfortunately, she could remember nothing of what had passed in her somnambulistic state. She could only guess that she must have been impersonating in a dream the principal actor in that grim tragedy which the old hall had witnessed a century or more ago.

We were interrupted by the appearance of my sister Jane, whom the sound of the falling pistol had roused. Something in the expression of my sister's face induced me to whisper hastily in Alwyne's ear:

"May I tell her you have made me a promise?—and will you keep it?"

With the nature of that promise, and its subsequent fulfilment, the reader has no concern. There, as far as we knew, ended the story of Bewley Hall.

But in due time I found a purchaser for the estate, for whom the romantic associations of the old Hall were the principal attraction.

He exerted himself to trace the history of Sir William Hedges, and succeeded in getting into communication with a member of the family, a rather remote descendant, who was induced to supply the following particulars:

Late in life, that is to say after he had passed his sixtieth year, Sir William took an old man's fancy for the daughter of his parish clergyman, a girl of scarcely seventeen. Rosamund, as she was named, showed the greatest reluctance to marry the knight, for no reason that she was willing to assign, except his great age.

Her father and mother, dazzled by Sir William's wealth and his promises on behalf of their daughter, forced her into the match, and in due course she went to live in the Hall as Sir William's wife.

But, unknown to her parents, and of course to her new husband, Rosamund had secretly given her heart to a penniless young gentleman of the Greville family, living some twenty miles away. Unable to bear the prospect of losing each other altogether, the lovers agreed upon a method of communication, which they meant should be wholly innocent,

He was in the act of stretching out his fingers to pick up the rose . . . when Sir William fired.

Once in every month, when the moon was at the full, young Greville was to ride across to Bewley Hall by night, and obtain entrance through the door of the rose garden, of which Rosamund provided him with a key.

Rosamund, on her part, was to descend into the hall, after her lord had fallen asleep, and place a white rose upon the table as a token that all was well, and that she still preserved her fidelity to her first love. On entering the hall and finding the white rose there, Greville was to take it away with him, leaving a red rose in its place, as an answering pledge.

For some months the lovers kept up their romantic tryst without discovery. But at last there came a night when it had rained hard during the day, and unwittingly the lover brought in some of the mud of the rose garden on his boots, and left it on the stones of the hall.

As ill-luck would have it, Sir William woke that morning early, and came down before his household was astir. He noticed the mud-stains, and the red rose upon the table, and, following up the scent, discovered the hoof-prints of Greville's horse outside.

Firmly believing the worst, the knight swore to be revenged upon his unknown rival, and from that time he set himself to watch night after night for an opportunity of surprising him.

When the appointed night came round again, Sir William, who was as usual watching, while feigning to be asleep, saw his wife rise from his side, take a white rose in her hand, and go down into the hall.

Leaving the bedchamber directly after her, the knight armed himself with a loaded pistol, and went and hid himself in the musicians' gallery, to see what would follow.

He failed to see his wife, who was already returning upstairs again. But before Rosamund had made the discovery of her husband's vigilance, the door of the rose garden was opened, and young Greville stole in, with a red rose in his hat-band.

He was in the act of stretching out his fingers to pick up the rose left by his sweetheart, when Sir William fired. The ball pierced the lover's heart, and he fell forward, his blood gushing over the white flower, which it dyed to the colour of that one he had been going to replace it with.

Immediately Lady Hedges, who had that moment found her husband's place vacant, ran shrieking out into the gallery, and flung herself headlong down beside her lover's corpse, breaking her neck against the ground.

This awful catastrophe served to unsettle the reason of its author, whom the law refrained from punishing.

He caused the Hall to be shut up, and when he died many years after, he so ordered it by his will that none should reopen the ancient building, nor profane the scene of the tragedy with any sort of pleasure or diversion, as long as the Hall should remain in the hands of his descendants.

* * * * *

The above narrative, I need not remark, exactly fits in with the experiences I have just related, and which the reader is at liberty to accept or reject, as he may please.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

A BAD BARGAIN.

"Is *this* my little baby brother?
Why what a teeny tiny, mother!
His head is like my rubber ball,
He isn't any use at all;
He is so very small, you see,
I'm sure he cannot play with me.
He will when he grows big, you say?
I want one who can play to-day.
'Twill take him such a time to grow,
I really cannot wait, you know,
Please, couldn't you," the small maid cries,
"Just change him for a larger size?"

E. A. MAYO.

General Baron Faverot de Kerbrech.

SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

XIV.—SEDAN.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF GENERAL BARON FAVEROT DE KERBRECH.

AS RELATED TO THE EDITOR OF "THE ROYAL MAGAZINE."

Scarcely a fortnight after my interview with General Faverot de Kerbrech the sad news reached me that he had suddenly died. If I except Colonel Dodge, whose wonderful experiences at the Battle of Gettysburg appeared in THE ROYAL some months ago, General Faverot is the most vivid and enthralling *raconteur* I have ever met, and, still with the same exception, the most charming and courteous man.

During the early part of the Franco German War General Faverot filled the position of Equerry to the Emperor Napoleon III. At Sedan he was placed on the Staff of General Ducrot.

The Battle of Sedan was fought on September 1st, 1870, and it may be described as the decisive battle of the Franco-German War. After several hours' severe fighting the French Army was surrounded and compelled to surrender unconditionally. Marshal MacMahon and General de Wimpffen commanded the French, General Von Moltke the German forces. The King of Prussia and the Emperor Napoleon were present at the battle.

My thanks are due to Colonel Dodge for his kind assistance in preparing this article for publication.

DID *monsieur* ever hear of the ball at Carignan? No? I imagined he might have done so, as it was a tolerably notorious event at the time. Notorious in England, I should say, for we of General Ducrot's staff, who were supposed to be the leading spirits of this famous affair, knew nothing about it at the time. Oh, it was a lively entertainment, that ball!

Let me explain. A few days after the battle of Sedan had become history, the *Times* came out with an article describing how General Ducrot and his staff employed the night of August 30th, two nights before the batile. We were said to have passed those fateful hours on the "light fantastic toe," to have danced into the morning: and your great newspaper held us up to the world as a shocking example of Gallic levity in the face of a situation of the utmost gravity—a perfectly shocking example!

Well, *mon ieur*, we all err occasionally—even the *Times!* In that admirable article had crept one or two little errors. For example: General Ducrot and his staff—I was one of the General's staff-officers at the time—passed the night of the 30th at Blagny, not at Carignan, and then—to mention another trifling mistake—there was no ball at all, nor anything like a ball—very far from it, I assure you, very far indeed!

We passed that night at Blagny, as I have said, in two miserable rooms, the General occupying one, his staff, which consisted of six men, the other, and both the General and his staff had nothing softer to lie on than straw. And even these palatial quarters were not over easy to secure. For the peasants of Blagny treated us abominably. Judging from their conduct, we might have been the invaders, instead of the defenders, of France.

Added to all this, we were in a state of profound depression. We all felt, and General Ducrot most of all, that our position was one of the utmost jeopardy. I doubt whether any of us snatched more than an hour's sleep that night. The General, I believe, never closed his eyes. As Commander of the First Corps of our Army, his responsibilities were appalling. He was one of our most brilliant and capable leaders, and he certainly appreciated the full peril of the situation. From the south-east the Germans were advancing upon us in overwhelming numbers, flushed with triumph from the

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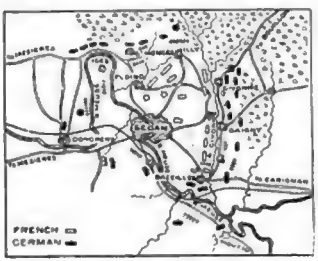
recent victories of Woerth and Spicheren, Mars la Tour and Gravelotte. Our Commander, Marshal MacMahon, was a brave man, but assuredly no match for General Von Moltke, the greatest living strategist. We had cause enough for sleeplessness, cause enough for depression, and we were very glad when the morning dawned.

So much, *monsieur*, for the "ball of Carignan."

Next day we were ordered to retreat towards the plateau of Sedan, an area of a few miles in extent, bounded on the east by the river Givonne, on the north by the villages of St. Menges and Illy, and on the west and south by the Meuse. Sedan lies in a depression in the middle of this plateau, which the surrounding country overtops almost on every side. Together with the rest of the French Army we fell back into this



Plan of the Battle of Sedan.

man-trap on the 31st, and sat there awaiting the advance of the Germans.

Shall I go into the reasons for this extraordinary piece of strategy, and proceed to excuse it, to criticise it, to condemn it, to improve on it? I think not.

On the night of August 31st we bivouacked at Daigny, which lies a few miles east of Sedan, and at five in the morning the boom of a single gun roused us from our uneasy slumbers. The sound came from the south, and General Ducrot, who straightway hustled us all into our saddles, declared it to be a Prussian signal for advance. He was right, as events proved.

The morning was shrouded in a thick fog—so thick that you could see but a few paces ahead. A span of silence, broken only by the movements of our own troops, preceded that first sound of battle. Then, from the south another cannon boomed out, another and another. The crackle of musketry followed, and we knew, beyond a doubt, that the Prussians had arrived and meant business.

They had begun the battle with an attack on the village of Bazeilles—Bazeilles, where the fiercest fighting of that terrible day took place. Hour after hour attack and defence swayed to and fro in those simple streets and cottages. Now the Germans gained the ground, now the French hurled them back. Civilians, even women, took part in the fray, and it was only when the tortured village caught fire and became one vast furnace that the gallant defenders finally retired towards Sedan.

But of the fight for Bazeilles I personally saw nothing. My duties kept me busily employed on the eastern and northern portions of the battlefield. Scarcely once during the whole day was I able to snatch a moment's rest. An indefatigable man himself, my chief never spared his subordinates, and I think he exacted pretty well every ounce of work from "Paymaster" and me.

But who was "Paymaster"?

He was my horse, and in spite of his foreign blood, he did as gallant work as though he had been serving his own country. "Paymaster" was English, a steeplechaser, one of those long-limbed beasts, all lung and endurance, and designed rather for the chase than the battlefield. I had arrived on the scene of action with two horses; but my orderly, for reasons best known to himself, had made off with the other one, and by the time the first German guns boomed from the south, he was safe and sound across the Belgian frontier. So "Paymaster" had to bear the brunt of the day.

But I am bound to admit that at first he scarcely rose to the occasion. To begin with, he was slender in the middle piece, and, having no breast-strap, his saddle persisted in slipping back towards his haunches. Moreover, the ground we traversed was very irksome to the poor fellow. Accustomed as he was to long, clear runs across level land, the rough, almost jagged country round Sedan put him thoroughly out of temper. Whenever we took an incline I slid promptly back on to his haunches and annoyed him into doing his best to make life a burden to me. He capered and caracoled, stood on his fore, and lashed out with his hind, legs, emptied my saddle-bags of all their contents, and more than once tried to run clean away with me.

Indeed, he so hampered me at first in carrying out my duties that I became quite anxious lest General Ducrot might imagine I had lost my nerve and hidden myself away in some safe corner of the field. However, to my intense relief, I was able at last to lay hands on a breast-strap and fix the saddle, after which "Paymaster" behaved like an angel and did his duty like the fine animal he was.

It was about eight o'clock. The mists had rolled away, disclosing a dazzling blue sky. In the south the noise of battle had steadily increased, and I could see vast clouds of smoke rising lazily into the still morning air. The news that reached us from this part of the field was, on the whole, reassuring. We were holding our own, and more than holding our own, at Bazeilles. The enemy had been repulsed with frightful carnage.

All along our eastern line the German columns were slowly and surely pressing forward. Our corps lay along the Givonne. Directly eastward the wooded hills began to talk the stern language of battle, and shells with ever-increasing frequency burst around us. Personally, I seldom caught a glimpse of the foe, who worked his way behind intervening rises in the ground and screening woods. Nothing but momentary tongues of flame and heavy clouds of smoke betrayed the presence of that irresistible force which was slowly and surely crushing us backward to our doom.

It was about this time that a dramatic event occurred. An orderly officer rode up to General Ducrot with startling news.

Marshal MacMahon had fallen severely wounded, and had given over the chief command of the Army to General Ducrot.

Now, Ducrot realised the peril of our position perhaps better than any general in the field, though even he would have received with incredulity the prophecy that Sedan and the whole French Army would capitulate within the next twenty-four hours! But he knew that our men were more or less demoralised and hopelessly outnumbered, our positions badly chosen, and our foe superbly directed. Our only hope lay in a hurried retreat westward to Mezières. Accordingly, without a moment's hesitation, and in spite of the protests of his colleague, General Lebrun, he issued orders to that effect. Had they been carried out defeat might have been postponed; at any rate, the crowning disaster would have been averted.

But fate, in the person of General de Wimpffen, intervened.

Two days previously this officer had arrived from Paris with a letter in his pocket, signed by the Minister of War, authorising him to take over the command of the Army should any accident befall Marshal MacMahon. He was an imperious, courageous man, but unfamiliar with our Army and the battlefield, and to him belongs the lion's share of bringing about the catastrophe of Sedan.

He was very careful to keep his instructions secret even from the Emperor Napoleon, to whom he paid his respects on arriving at Sedan. After Marshal MacMahon's fall he still hesitated, but when from his position at the south of the field he saw the French troops falling back in accordance with General Ducrot's orders, he threw discretion to the winds and hastened to where my chief stood superintending the careful withdrawal of the troops at the back of Bazeilles and along the Givonne.

I was present at the fateful interview, which was of a rather stormy character. De Wimpffen, first of all, produced his credentials and then demanded the reason for Ducrot's retrograde tactics.

My chief pointed out that our Army in its present position was in imminent danger of becoming completely enveloped.

De Wimpffen rudely brushed this explanation aside. "The north, he said, was still open (as a matter of fact scouts had made a desultory search there and seen nothing—not even a vast force of the enemy which, screened by the thick woods, was converging on Sedan), the combat about Bazeilles was still being sustained, "and if we retreat at all," said de Wimpffen, "it will be to break through to the south—not to the west, as you propose."

To retreat to the south would have meant a retreat into the arms of the German reserves. But of this de Wimpffen lacked knowledge, and he equally ignored the *morale* of his troops, the strength of the enemy, and the topography of the battlefield.

"But in any case," he concluded, "it's not a retreat we want, it's a victory!"

And forthwith Ducrot's wise orders were countermanded. He was, naturally, much upset, but, de Wimpffen being his superior officer, he was forced to obey, and the troops returned to their positions along the Givonne.

In the light of after-events it is perfectly obvious that de Wimpffen's decision was the one thing needed to insure the complete success of Von Moltke's vast design. The chief reason for the German commander's furious attack on Bazeilles and our positions

on the Givonne was to hold us back and distract our attention while be completed an enveloping movement in our rear. Two corps under the Crown Prince of Prussia crossed the Meuse at Douchery and pushed rapidly northwards with the intention of cutting off our retreat. If they succeeded in their design, the fate of our Army was sealed. And they succeeded because of de Wimpffen's interference.

So the fight at Bazeilles continued with unabated fury and the long-drawn artillery duel on the Givonne developed. It was only after nine that we began to feel the full force of the German attack in that quarter of the field. An incident which occurred at about that time stands out clearly in my memory.

General Ducrot and his staff had halted beside a battery in the neighbourhood of Daigny. Suddenly the General uttered an exclamation and asked me for my field-glasses. He was continually doing so, as they were an excellent three-guinea pair and far better than his own. He pointed to a clearing in the wooded slopes about a mile away which had suddenly become alive with troops, and exclaimed:

"Can those possibly be our men?"

A moment's scrutiny, however, convinced him that the troops in question were German, and he immediately ordered the battery to open fire on them.

The Germans "ducked," but instead of retreating, as they would have done had they merely been scouting, they sprang to their feet and hurried forward.

"That settles it," cried the General. "They have orders to advance."

And he commanded the gunners to pepper them for all they were worth.

Now, General Ducrot stood between two batteries at the time, and in his excitement he placed himself directly in front of one of them. Quick as an arrow, I pounced upon him and drew him aside.

"If you are anxious to be shot, General," I cried, "at least reserve yourself for the enemy!"

He laughed and drew back.

We had been working and fighting on practically empty stomachs all the morning, and at about eleven o'clock, in spite of anxiety and excitement, we began to feel the pangs of hunger, and one of my comrades proposed taking lunch.

Easier said than done!

We were occupying at the time a wide, rolling stretch of ploughed land, and round us on every side fell the hostile shells. We dismounted, produced from our saddlebags what eatables there were—a sausage, some chocolate, and a flask of brandy; but whenever we attempted to start eating, down came a Prussian shell in our proximity, pelting us with earth and sand and spoiling our precious dainties. From pillar to post we were driven in search of a sheltered spot, but finding none, we dispatched our lunch as best we might. But it was more than our "peck of dirt" that we ate!

I have often thought how fortunate it was for us that the Germans used percussion shells—shells which, as you are doubtless aware, only explode when they come in contact with a hard body. The ground over which we moved was, as I have said, recently ploughed, so that most of the shells sank into the soft soil, and in exploding only threw up a column of earth. Much of the country surrounding Sedan was in a similar condition, otherwise our losses would have been much heavier than they were.

By this time it became evident, even to de Wimpffen, that the French Army was in desperate straits. After a few momentary successes along the Givonne our men had everywhere been forced back by overwhelming and ever-increasing artillery fire and irresistible determination. At Bazeilles we were still more or less holding our own. But North of Sedan—at St. Menges and Illy—Moltke's grand surrounding movement was at last developing. A hundred or more guns had been placed on the hills across our only line of retreat; and the German infantry emerged from the woods and hills and rushed the French positions, hurling us backward towards the doomed town.

With their concentric fire the German guns decimated our unhappy troops with an awful hail of steel and lead. In vain General Marguerite, who commanded the cavalry on the north, flung part of the *Chasseurs d'Afrique* against the steadily advancing infantry; the brave cavaliers did their best; they swept through some lines of German skirmishers, but wavered and broke before the terrible fire which met them when they came into touch with the main body of the enemy.

My chief, from his part of the field, saw how things were going. His worst fears were becoming realised with appalling rapidity. Shortly afterwards he encountered de Wimpffen returning from the north, whither he had ridden post-haste to examine this fearful, and to him totally unexpected, development of the German attack.

"If you are anxious to be shot, General," I cried, "at least reserve yourself for the enemy!"

"The events I predicted," said Ducrot, "have occurred sooner than I anticipated. The enemy is attacking Illy. Hurry up reinforcements if you would keep that position."

"You may have been right," said de Wimpffen. "Will you take charge of this part of the field?" and he rode away south, possessed with the idea of breaking through the unbreakable German positions there. But even had he followed my chief's advice, it is doubtful if any benefit would have accrued to us at this stage of the battle. Wearied, shaken, out-numbered and out-manœuvred, our devoted men were capable of little else than hopelessly defending their positions and selling their lives as dearly as they could.

With desperate valour they met the German onset at Illy. Ducrot reinforcing them with his own troops from the Givonne. But by this time the Germans had fully developed their attack from the north. No fewer than twenty-four of their batteries—one hundred and forty-four guns—had now been placed in advantageous positions, and poured upon us a perfect avalanche of death. Sedan was a gigantic artillery duel; the infantry, which generally does the hard work, was little employed that day, except at Bazeilles. In vain we attempted to bring our own guns to work; they were literally swept off the field. Position after position became untenable; our artillery defended them with despairing courage. But the German wave of battle irresistibly advanced; ordered retreat became confusion, and finally, in spite of Ducrot's frantic intreaties and threats, a large part of his troops melted away among the woods, or fled panic-stricken into Sedan.

The Battle of Sedan is the most crushing disaster ever sustained by the French Army. We might well look back on it with shame were it not for the glorious event which I am about to relate—that last gallant, death-defying, but, alas, defeated, attempt to break through the iron zone with which Von Moltke had incircled us.

There were still unused Marguerite's five regiments of cavalry. These had been held in reserve until the present moment, and to them Ducrot made his final appeal. But Marguerite had been borne off the field severely wounded, and I was dispatched with orders to General de Gallifet, who was now in command, to charge the enemy's positions on the hills opposite. I rode up to him and gave him Ducrot's orders.

"But it is impossible!" said de Gallifet, and pointed out what might almost be called a ravine which separated us from the enemy.

I returned to Ducrot and described the situation. Impatiently he brushed de Gallifet's objections aside and pointed out that if he led his men some little distance eastward he would find a suitable opening for a charge right on to the Prussian lines.

I put spurs into "Paymaster," and rode back to de Gallifet, Ducrot following me to see that his instructions were carried out. Once his path was made clear to him, de Gallifet lost not a moment in the performance of his terrific task. At the head of his heroes, a gallant vision of brilliant uniforms and glittering steel in the sunshine, he swept past Ducrot and his staff, who, with drawn swords, cheered the men on.

They rode to the right, they turned their faces northwards, they charged. . . .

A rattle of musketry from our own lines drew Ducrot's attention. A body of French troops, excitedly mistaking their comrades for the enemy, had opened fire on them, and I was dispatched hot-haste to apprise them of their error.

The cavalry swept on. Up the hillside of Floing they dashed upon a cloud of German skirmishers, which had just attained the summit. Through them they broke like a tempest, and headed full for the main body in the rear. A volley of Prussian lead devastated their ranks; they wavered, reformed, and fell undismayed on their enemy's flanks. Again and again in every direction, and with furious courage, they returned in groups to the attack. The Germans met them in every formation; in the line, in squares, and even back to back.

From hillside to valley they swept, repelled but undaunted, broken but unvanquished. Once they rode right into a Prussian battery, and were only driven out by the concentrated fire of a body of infantry; other squadrons of horse took a village by storm, penetrating through the hostile lines, and falling on some German trains in the rear. Far off to the south, the King of Prussia, on that eminence from which he watched the battle, followed the charge through his field-glasses with breathless interest, and exclaimed to Von Moltke beside him:

"Ah, the brave fellows! the brave fellows!"

But all in vain. At every point they were finally repulsed, and de Gallifet knew that nothing else remained for him but to ride back to the shelter of the French lines, and save what remnant he could of his gallant men. Miraculously unwounded, and still in the van, he returned over the dreadful ground

"As they swept by they saluted with their swords . . . and shouted: *Vive l'Empereur!*

he had covered half-an-hour earlier, and leading scarcely half the force he had set out with, he rejoined the army he had so heroically attempted to save.

In connection with his retreat to our lines, General de Gallifet told me a stirring story. Some time after the battle was fought, and when he was a prisoner in Germany, he was one day accosted by a Prussian major.

"I notice, General, that you do not salute me."

"But really," exclaimed the amazed de Gallifet, "is it the rule in this country for officers to salute their inferiors in rank? Or do you mean to tell me that prisoners should salute their captors?"

The Prussian laughed.

"Neither the one nor the other," he said. "But I think you might salute me as the man who saved your life."

And he told de Gallifet how, in retreating after the great final charge of Sedan, the bruised and repulsed French cavalry had been compelled to ride past a Prussian regiment.

"That was my regiment," said the major, "and immediately you gallant fellows hove in sight we prepared to fire on you. But it seemed to me worse than butchery to shoot down such splendid soldiers, especially as they were defeated and broken, and could no longer do us any harm.

"So I ordered my troops to abstain from firing, and to let you pass by unmolested. This order many of your men perceived, and as they swept by they saluted with their swords in acknowledgment of the courtesy shown to their bravery, and shouted: '*Vive l'Empereur!*'"

"But," said de Gallifet much moved, "I saw nothing of this."

"No," replied the major, "for you were at the head of your troops. Only those behind you saw the incident."

So that splendid, death-defying charge failed, and the remnants of de Gallifet's cavalry fell back into the death-trap which the Germans had now completely incircled with steel and iron.

Without a pause and with ever-increasing intensity they poured upon us from all sides a hurricane of shells. Ducrot knew only too well how worse than useless any further attempt to break through the hostile lines would prove, and, together with de Gallifet, he turned his horse's head, and rode slowly south towards Sedan. I followed them, still mounted on old "Paymaster."

De Gallifet was desperate and heart-broken over the bitter result of his last tremendous effort. Suddenly he turned to Ducrot.

"General," he said, "all is lost—all except honour. Let us return to the fight and die."

But my chief shook his head.

"You have done what you could," he replied. "So have I. We had best undergo our fate. Who knows but we may be able to help France later on?"

So we rode south.

Sedan, as I have said, lies in a hollow, and after riding some distance we lost our way. Ducrot turned to me.

"Just go on ahead, and find out where we are," he said, "and the nearest path to Sedan."

I put spurs into weary but willing "Paymaster," who galloped gallantly over the rugged country in search of the doomed town.

Suddenly, from a rise in the ground, I came upon Sedan, lying at the foot of the hill. I returned to Ducrot and de Gallifet, and together we descended to the gates of the fortress. But there at first we were refused admittance, the place being already overcrowded with desperate, panic-stricken, and wounded soldiers. Eventually, however, we were let in by a postern-gate, but were compelled to leave our horses in the ditch, where they found a bite of grass.

It is useless to recapitulate all that went on in that inferno until the Emperor finally ordered the white flag to be hoisted, and the thunder of the Prussian guns ceased. But one event stands out indelibly graven on my mind. It was the most tremendous moment I have ever experienced in my life.

De Wimpffen, who resolutely clung to the wild notion that, could he but gather together a determined body of men, he would still be able to break through Von Moltke's impregnable lines, hit on a drastic idea for putting heart into the disheartened troops.

Suddenly, through the streets some officers, their faces all alight with wild excitement, rushed, shouting the terrific words:

"*Bazaine has arrived! Bazaine has arrived!*"

It may be difficult for you, to-day, to realise what that cry meant to us. We all imagined that Marshal Bazaine, with his army, lay closely besieged in Metz. That he should have broken away and come to our rescue in the very nick of time, when we had reached the last ebb of endurance, was almost more than our tortured nerves could stand. I nearly went mad with excitement. But all

too soon we saw through the ruse, and though de Wimpffen, brave and foolhardy man that he was, gathered a few devoted troops together and made an easily-frustrated attack on the German positions south of Sedan, the incircling batteries never ceased their terrible fire, and we knew that nothing now could save us—least of all Bazaine and his army, who were soon to undergo a fate even more humiliating than ours.

At five o'clock the white flag fluttered in the sunshine above the church tower, and almost simultaneously the roar of battle died down into silence.

* * * * *

There is little more to tell. All your readers know what followed on the capitulation—how the Emperor rode almost unattended out of Sedan in the vain hope of gaining easy terms for his vanquished army; how late that night de Wimpffen met Von Moltke and Bismarck in a little inn south-west of Sedan and employed every argument, political and military, every threat, every intreaty he could think of to soften Von Moltke's stern ultimatum—unconditional surrender. But if Bismarck was iron, Von Moltke was adamant, and early next morning the French Army, with arms, bag and baggage, passed as prisoners of war into the grasp of the invaders.

And "Paymaster"?

He, I think, met with a better fate than most. After the capitulation, my orderly got him for me, and it was on his back that I rode to Pont à Mousson, a little fortress, fifty miles from Sedan, where the Prussians had decided we should pass the first period of our imprisonment. At Pont à Mousson, a horsedealer had the insolence to offer me twenty francs for my old friend. Indignantly, I sent the fellow about his business. Later on, seeing a Prussian cavalry officer whose appearance pleased me, I offered him the horse as a gift—on one condition.

"And that is, major?" asked the German.

"That if, after three days, you find him unsuitable, you shoot him."

He accepted my terms, and "Paymaster" as I bade each other farewell. I never learnt his fate, but that he lived happily ever after I have little doubt, for he was a good horse. . . . I remember him with gratitude old "Paymaster"! . . .

General de Wimpffen. General Von Moltke. Prince Bismarck. Omitted.

THE CAPITULATION OF SEDAN.

From the Painting of Anton Von Werner.

By permission of the Berlin Photographic Co., 168 New Bond Street, London, W.

The Impertinence of the Spider

A Fragment of History.

By Janet C. Lennard.

He was a very absurd young spider, confident and cheeky to a degree, and he found himself one day quite early in his career carried amongst some flower-pots into a large conservatory.

"This is a fine place," said he, "and exactly suited to me. I think I'll make a large, strong web here and stay for a time, at least till I get tired and want a new adventure." So saying, he ran easily up one side of the house and surveyed the flowers from his high vantage-ground.

The conservatory was filled with chrysanthemums, and the Spider saw at once that all the lovely blooms were sound asleep; as a matter of fact, they were having their mid-day nap, and he determined to use the time wisely by making his web before anyone could interfere.

He chose out the most beautiful chrysanthemum in the house—a "Good Gracious"—and spun down from the roof to her stately form, weaving his web tightly round and round her petals. But so lightly did he weave that she never moved, and all was made secure. Then he ascended his web to hide in a corner and watch for his first victim.

Perfect silence reigned in the conservatory until the Spider had caught and devoured his first luscious fly, and was licking his whiskers in anticipation of another dainty morsel, when at last the flowers awoke and, yawning, stretched themselves slightly. Then, to her intense indignation, beautiful "Good Gracious" found herself tied and cramped by several tightly-drawn bonds, which, delicate though they were, chafed and irritated her beyond endurance.

She swayed and quivered on her stem from side to side with fright and anger, and called on her companions to witness the insult put upon her.

"Who has dared," she said, "to touch me? Whoever it is shall suffer. Let him wait till Mr. Brown comes!"

"He! he!" laughed the Spider from his corner. "What a lark! I caught you, madam, when you were asleep; and who is going to deliver you, I should like to know, till I choose to remove my web?—and you bet I sha'n't just yet!" he added spitefully.

"Shame, shame!" cried all the blooms, nodding violently and much excited.

"What impertinence!" cried "Good Gracious," reduced to indignant tears. "Won't you get paid out when Mr. Brown comes. I declare he will stamp you to dust in his anger!"

"Who's Mr. Brown?" laughed the Spider, a trifle anxiously. "What do *I* care for any Mr. Brown? I was tired of living in my dingy old home in the stable-yard, so I just told my old parents I was off, and Fate has brought me here, and here I mean to stop, so there! And besides, if your Mr. Brown—whoever he may be—does come, I don't suppose he'll ever look at you."

"*Not* look at *me!*" screamed "Good Gracious" excitedly, "why, I am the joy of his heart—the delight of his eyes! he says so many times a day—not look at *me* indeed!" and the other blooms (who good-naturedly shared everybody's admiration for their beautiful companion) chimed in with expressions of horror and anger at the Spider's insolence.

Presently the door leading into the garden opened, and a very portly person—no other

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than Mr. Brown, the head-gardener—entered, and looked around him.

All the chrysanthemums turned beseeching eyes upon him, as if to tell him their trouble and beg his help, whilst "Good Gracious" almost broke her stem in her endeavour to attract his attention.

Good Mr. Brown, deaf to the voices of his darlings, but very much alive to their beauty, made straight for his "joy and delight," and found the poor thing caught and tied in a most intricate web.

"Well, I'm dashed!" said he. "My poor beauty! I never see'd the likes o' that afore. Fancy! building his dirty mess on my beauty. I'll teach him manners; wait till I gets a ladder and follows of that there web up. I'll give him what for!"

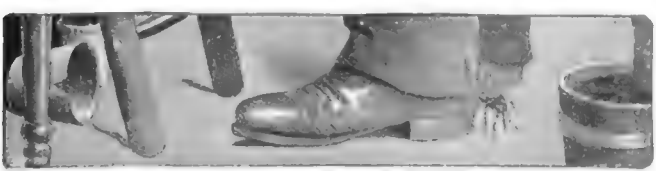
So saying, after carefully releasing "Good Gracious" from her galling bonds, he walked solemnly off to get the highest ladder he could find and so catch the enemy.

where he sat and chuckled to himself as he heard Mr. and Mrs. Brown's uncomplimentary remarks on his behaviour.

After the irate gardener had taken himself off again to his work, and Mrs. Brown had begun hers, our friend ran quietly up to the darkest corner of the ceiling, and there spun another fine, strong web, and sat himself down to watch events.

Fortunately for him, Mrs. Brown was rather a short-sighted person, and not given to seeing cobwebs and such other housekeeping worries, so the Spider spent two or three very pleasant days in his enemy's snug kitchen, until the sharp-eyed daughter, Emma, came home from a visit to her aunt.

"Lor! ma," said she, whilst having tea with her mother on the day of her arrival, "what a 'orrible big cobweb there is up there, and a large spider, too. I'll be bound. I see you can't get on without me



He would hide behind a convenient flower-pot, and then steal out and run up Mr. Brown's leg.

But the Spider was too quick for that. He by no means relished the idea of the fat man and his ladder, and he scuttled off, as quickly as his long legs could carry him, down the wall and along the floor until a brilliant idea struck him. He would hide behind a convenient flower-pot, and then steal out and run up Mr. Brown's leg and hide just inside his coat, and by so doing he would get a free ride away out of the conservatories into unknown regions—perhaps even to the gardener's *own* cottage if lucky, where he could easily slip off, and make his next web there if he cared to do so.

A bold scheme, verily, and most successful; for by the time fat Mr. Brown had brought the ladder, climbed it, and found the enemy escaped, he came down in no very pleasant frame of mind, and stalked off muttering to himself, to air his opinions on spiders and all such "varmints" to his wife, unconsciously carrying the Spider along with him, right to his own fireside. When there, that astute young insect made off into a dark corner, at home. Now I'll move that gentleman sharp," and she sprang up to get a duster.

And now, indeed, it was a tight corner for the Spider! but the window was open, and, deftly swinging himself down on a loose strand of his web, he made his way out of it, just as Miss Brown, with her duster in one hand, and dragging a large chair with the other, entered the room.

"Glory! that was a close shave!" ejaculated the Impudent One. "I rather think life is too exciting out of the stable-yard, but I'll have another go yet before I return and own myself beaten. It's a queer thing that everyone's hand seems turned against me—*me* who never hurt anyone in my life except that proud, stuck-up 'Good Gracious'—stupid thing! That was a lark though!"

"I think," he went on as he sauntered along, "I'll try the big house next, where the missis and master live; perhaps *they* will be kinder to a poor innocent spider." So saying he winked wickedly to himself, and sat winking and blinking on the front doorstep

of the cottage, where he had drawn up for rest, and to ponder over the means of accomplishing his latest desire. Just as he came to the conclusion he would have to give up his plan for lack of a way, two under-gardeners brought along a large stand with handles, which they set down on the path nearest the cottage, and proceeded to place on it pots of small ferns taken out of a glass frame near at hand.

"How now?" thought the Spider, "I'll crawl up that and see what happens." So he carefully ran along the path till he got near the stand; and when the men were stooping over the frame lifting out some more pots, he quickly ran up one leg and hid himself amongst the ferns. The latter did not like it at all, and tried to shake him off, but he wound his legs round the tiny stem of one maidenhair, and sat there laughing with glee.

At last the men filled the stand, and, lifting it, away they all went, and the Spider gathered from the ferns' conversation that they were going down to the big house to adorn the drawing-room. He made up his mind *he* would also adorn it, and "far better than you," he told them. "nasty, stuck-up little things," for if they could not shake him off they had determined to send him to "Coventry," and would not answer a single one of his many inquiries.

He quickly ran up one leg and hid himself amongst the ferns.

After a great deal of jolting and shaking about, they arrived at the door of the mansion, and, awe-struck with the magnificence inside, were carried silently through a large hall into the drawing-room, where men, under Mr. Brown's eye, arranged the pots in various parts of the room.

"I wonder if old 'Good Gracious' will come," thought the Spider, but he carefully kept that episode to himself. Just at that moment the door was thrown wide open, and in came Mr. Brown and his attendants with a load of the most beautiful chrysanthemums he possessed, far and away the most noble being the identical "Good Gracious."

These Mr. Brown carefully arranged *himself*, in front of a large glass which covered one side of the wall, and having carefully placed his "joy and delight" in the centre, left the room with the other men.

And now the Spider, unable longer to control his feelings, ran into the middle of the room, and, bowing low before "Good Gracious," asked her sarcastically how she was, and whether she had recovered from the severe shock to the nerves which he heard she had lately received.

"Good Gracious" almost fainted at the sight of the Hateful

One, and, explaining her grievance to the rest of the assembled company, they all burst forth into a hubbub of wrath, calling the Spider everything they could think of.

"This is not good enough," said he, "I'll bite some of you," and running to the pot of one acid-faced fern, whose remarks had been anything but kind, he scrambled up her surface, intent on making the owner smart by biting her stems or otherwise annoying her This fern, however, happened to be one placed close against the large glass in amongst the chrysanthemums, and the Spider, crawling along one of her long branches, found himself face to face, as he imagined, with another spider of the same size as himself.

She lifted up one of the big feet.

"Hallo!" said the Spider. "Who are you, prowling and trespassing on my ground? What, won't answer, won't you? Come on, then, let's have a set to," and he flung himself violently at the other. The next moment he found himself struggling down amongst the bottom of the pots, having received a most tremendous blow from the unknown spider in the glass, and all the flowers and ferns were bursting themselves with laughter, jeering at, and cheering him on to fresh exertions against his unknown adversary.

The angry creature made the best of his way up the fern-pot again, and re-attacked his enemy, who was quietly waiting for him, but with exactly the same result. As he lay writhing on the ground and feeling his poor eye, which was distinctly black by this time, the ferns and flowers shrieked in an agony of mirth, whilst "Good Gracious" managed to gasp out: "You born simpleton! have you never seen a looking-glass before? It's only yourself you've been fighting; oh, oh!" and she relapsed into renewed fits of laughter.

The Spider, by this time furious, looked in the glass and saw it was himself indeed, and in a sorry plight, so he slipped out as quickly as he could, and made for his old place in the middle of the floor, where he turned and harangued the flowers and ferns till they almost shook in their shoes.

"Come out, you stupid mummies!" he continued; "poor fools you are! Can't even walk! I know what I'll do, I'll weave webs all over you, I'll——"

"Better not," interrupted "Good Gracious," "or the maids will kill you; the one with the big feet will crush you to death!"

"Let them come," said he, "you warned me before, young plant, and what happened I should like to know?"

So he ran to and fro with his web and spun it round her and over several others—to their *great* disgust—and so across to a chair, and was making a last long thread to the sofa before resting to admire his handiwork, when the door opened again, this time to admit three women—two maids and the housekeeper.

As luck would have it, the maid with big feet began to dust the chair nearest to him.

"Lawks!" she said, "a spider's web, as I do believe; well I never!" and she knelt down and proceeded to wipe it away when her eye fell on the spider himself. She lifted up one of the big feet and—crash! plump it came, right down on top of him.

MR. —HIS PAGES.

"Mr. X" presents his friends with a right Royal feast this month—four pages of Simple Sells instead of his ordinary mixture. Read the sells, and you will chuckle: try them on your friends, and at least one of you will laugh. N.B.—It is as well to use discretion in the matter. Some of the sells should not be tried on large, strong, hot-tempered friends.

SIMPLE SELLS.

The Three Coin Trick.

"Sells" is, perhaps, the best name for the few simple tricks that will be explained here.

The first—a mere catch—seems absurdly simple on paper, but it generally has the desired effect on the first victim to whom you show it.

Put three coins on the table and pick them up one at a time, counting "One, two, three." Then put them down one at a time on the table and count "Four, five, six." Pick up two of them and at the same time count "seven, eight," point to the one which you leave on the table, and say "an extra one," and then put the two you have in your hand on the table one at a time, and count "nine, ten."

This leaves the three coins on the table. Ask anyone if they can do that and the chances are more than ten to one that they will begin by putting the three coins down one at a time and counting "one, two, three." If they do this they will not get through the puzzle, because the coins must be on the table before you begin to count. When you ask someone to do what you have done you pick the coins up and hand them to your victim. If you were to push the coins over to him he might not fall into the little trap.

Thought-Reading with Coins.

If some of the coins on the table are silver and some copper we are ready for our next little sell, which is to be a thought-reading trick. Ask a lady to pick up, say, a sixpence with her right hand, and a penny with her left, and to close her hands.

You then ask her to think hard of one of the coins, and ask her to put the hand containing the coin of which she is thinking close to her forehead. She is to do this when you have turned your back on her.

While you are in this position you hold your hand to your head—it is as well to make any trick look as genuine as possible — and then you tell your victim that you have read her thoughts and she can throw the coins on the table. You turn round and at once tell the lady of which coin she was thinking. You have obtained your clue by merely looking at her hands. The hand which she has been holding to her head will, of course, be whiter than the other, and as you saw her pick up the coins you know which coin was in the hand she held to her head.

Possibly this sell may be discovered. You do not admit that you have been found out, and to prove that the colour of the hand has nothing to do with it, you offer to do the trick again and to allow the victim to put her hands behind her back.

Still you are able, however, to discover what coin she was thinking of. You turn away and ask the lady holding the coins to show the one of which she is going to think to the audience, so that all may know whether your guess is correct or otherwise. In this case your victim is not a victim, but a confederate, with whom you have arranged matters beforehand. Anything is fair in an amateur's impromptu (?) trick.

If you are not able to employ a confederate you may substitute this next sell, which has rather a wonderful effect. Ten coins on the table are picked up by you. A lady is invited to take a coin, look at the date, replace the coin in your hand, and to think hard of the date. Slowly, and with some hesitation—as though you were not quite sure of the figures—you announce the date of which the lady is thinking.

There are two ways of doing this. Either your coins are all of the same date, or else you have carefully learnt by heart beforehand the date of each particular coin, and you were careful to see which coin the lady chose. With a very little trouble this thought-reading act can be worked up into a very good trick.

The simplest plan would be to have coins all of the same date in your right-hand trousers pocket, another lot of coins all of the same date in your right-hand hip-pocket, another lot in your left-hand trousers pocket.

When you have done the trick once, say, with the coins in your right-hand pocket, pick them up as though the experiment were finished, and return them to the left-hand pocket. To avoid the possibility of that lot of coins getting mixed up with the coins already in your left-hand trousers pocket, stuff a handkerchief into the pocket over the first lot of coins. There is still less chance of any "mix-up" when you put the coins in your hip-pocket, because you can easily keep the coins already there in their place by stuffing a handkerchief over them into one corner of the pocket.

Removing a Waistcoat without Taking *off* the Coat.

The next sell is hardly a sell at all, because you really do what you profess to do, namely, remove a man's waistcoat without taking off his coat. Few people unacquainted with the trick will be able to do it, and yet it is perfectly simple. Select a man whose waistcoat and coat do not fit too tightly, because the tighter they are the harder will be your task. You begin by unbuckling the waistcoat at the back and unbuttoning it. Stand in front of your man, put your hand over his shoulders and pull the waistcoat up at the back. Take hold of the top of the waistcoat, because you are to pull the waistcoat over the man's head, and if you do not begin by pulling the top over, you will not be able to proceed. The man must accommodate himself to your needs by ducking his head when the waistcoat is going over it.

The next step is to take hold of the right-hand bottom corner of the waistcoat—where the bottom button is—and carry it up through the armhole of the man's sleeve. Then put your arm up his sleeve and pull the waistcoat down as far as you can. If your victim bends his arm, he will then be able to slip his arm out of the armhole of the waistcoat. When this has been done, pull the waistcoat out of the sleeve and treat the left-hand side of the waistcoat in the same way by pulling it through the left sleeve. The waistcoat is then off, and the coat has not been removed.

The Magnetic Walking-Stick.

You can pretend to make a walking-stick stand on one end and remain in that position by magnetic influence exerted by the hands. You have a black thread fastened from one knee to the other, and when you sit down you open your knees slightly, thus drawing the thread tight, and lean the stick against the thread. Make two or three failures before you succeed.

The sell goes for nothing, of course, if you obviously have to make preparations for its performance. You must prepare for it beforehand, and the simplest way is to have one end of the thread fastened with a pin to the left-hand leg of your trousers near the knee, and the other end tied to a black pin, which is stuck into the top of your trousers on the left side.

When you want to magnetise the stick, you naturally go out into the hall to get a stick, and it is the work of a moment then to stick the pin to which the thread is attached into the right leg of your trousers near the knee. You are then ready for the sell, but keep your audience as far away from you as

possible, and perform in front of a dark background.

A Trick with a Shilling.

Ask someone to tie your hands behind your back, and to lend you a shilling. Hold the shilling between your teeth, and suggest that if, while your hands are tied behind your back, you can put the shilling into your trousers pocket it shall be yours.

To do this you walk behind a screen, bend down to a chair, leaving the shilling there, turn round, pick it up, and slip it into your pocket. You can then offer to free yourself from the string. Go behind the screen, take a pair of scissors from your hip pocket, cut yourself free, pocket the loose pieces of string, and exhibit another piece with which you had provided yourself beforehand. This piece must, of course, be exactly like the piece with which you were tied, and the deception is improved if the second piece has two or three knots tied in it.

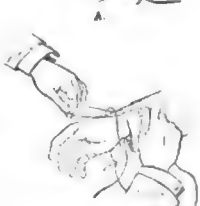
Sticking Sells.

A very old sell, but a very good one to play on people who do not know it, is to tie two people together and ask them to release themselves without cutting the string or untying the knots. They must be tied in this way:

The first man, whom we will call A, *(see accompanying sketch A)* has his wrists tied together with a long piece of string by having one end tied round one wrist and one round the other wrist. The second man is to have his wrists tied in the same way, but before the second knot is fixed pass the string behind A's string, so that the two men are linked together.

People who do not know the trick usually try to step out of the string, and in so doing get themselves literally into a tight place. To release them take hold of B's string in the centre *(see sketch B)*. Take the loop you thus get behind either of A's wrists, pass it through the piece that goes round his wrist, and slip it back over his hand.

A.



B.

Then, if A draws his wrists away, he will find that he is free. If you watch the way in which the string slips out at the wrist you will be able to reverse the process and link the two men together again.

A Simple Card Trick.

Card tricks are always popular, and the following example comes, in reality, under the heading of a sell.

Commence by placing two heaps of cards upon a table. One heap is composed of any ten cards you like. The other consists of the ten of spades, the ten of hearts, the ten of diamonds, and the ten of clubs.

Request a lady in the audience to choose in her mind one of the two heaps of cards. You then offer to write down the heap she has chosen.

Take a small piece of paper, and write on it: "The heap chosen is the ten heap."

This piece of paper is now folded up, and given to a third person to hold. The lady is then invited to disclose which heap she has selected.

Whatever answer she gives is quite immaterial. If she turns up the heap containing the ten cards it is obvious that your answer, "the ten heap," is correct.

On the other hand, if she points to the pile of four tens, your answer is also correct.

To Lift a Bottle with a Straw.

This little trick with a bottle and a straw never fails to win applause.

Take an ordinary medicine bottle and an ordinary straw, and hand them to a friend. Now challenge him to lift the bottle by the straw without previously tilting the bottle.

He will probably either say that the thing is impossible, or else make several ludicrous attempts to accomplish the task, which will add to the gaiety of the proceedings.

When he is tired, bend the straw and slip it into the bottle.

You can then easily perform the trick, to the astonishment of your friend.

Another String Trick.

Announce that you can tie a man up with two pieces of string, each only a foot long, in such a way that he cannot get free even with the use of a knife or a pair of scissors. To prove your ability to do this you induce your victim to kneel down, and while he is in that position you tie his right wrist to his right foot, and his left wrist to his left foot. You can then put a pair of scissors in front of him and ask him to cut himself free. He cannot move either hands or feet; in fact, the only movement he can make is the one that he will make if he tries to get hold of the scissors—he will fall over, and in that position be helpless.

A Thought-Reading Experiment.

Our last sell is really a trick, but the explanation is so simple that anyone can perform it.

Most people know the old style of thought-reading tricks, in which the performer conveyed the information he desired to impart to his assistant by the manner in which he asked questions.

In this new trick the performance is silent. The amateur first asks someone to blindfold his assistant, and to lead her out of the room. He then asks the company to think of something that the assistant is to do when she returns to the room. To prove that he does not communicate with her by any signs or sounds the performer leaves the room directly his assistant is brought back. The assistant stands blindfolded in the room for a moment, and then slowly proceeds to do what the company had desired that she should do.

How is it done?

There does not appear to be any kind of communication between the performer and his assistant, and they are not even in the room together at the same time. The fact is, however, that there is a system of communication between them, and it is established in this way. The assistant, who, by-the-way, should be a lady, has a piece of black thread tied round her ankle.

The thread can be prepared beforehand with a loop, so that directly the assistant gets outside the room she can slip it over her foot. It is a long piece of thread, and the unattached end is left outside the room when the assistant returns. The performer goes outside, finds the end of the thread (because he has previously arranged with his assistant as to where she will leave it). The performer pulls gently on the thread until it is taut, and then signals a message to his assistant.

The signalling is managed in this way. One sharp, short pull on the thread would mean A, two pulls would signal B, three C, and so on. Two short pulls in quick succession signals a full stop.

In this way the performer can easily and quickly signal the initials of someone in the room. He then goes on to signal the action required of the assistant. With a little practice beforehand the performer and assistant can arrange a series of contractions for words.

Thus, "t—a" will do for take, "h—a" for hand, "p" for put, "f—r—e" for fire, and so on. Use strong black carpet thread, and if you are doing the trick several times—it is a trick that bears repetition—just run the thread through your fingers to see that it is not being worn too thin after the first two experiments. You will, of course, assert that this is a genuine experiment, in which you really transmit your thoughts to your assistant, and to make the task the more easy for you, you ask the people to be absolutely silent.

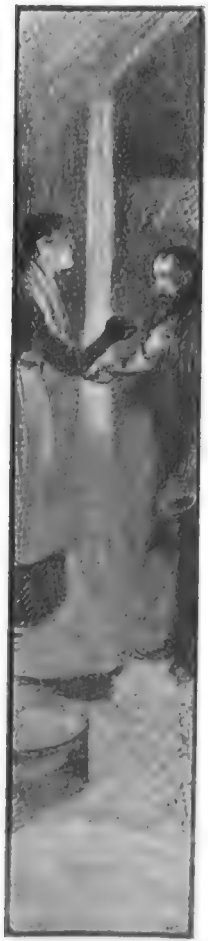
The beauty of the trick lies in the fact that it is done in silence, that the lady is really blindfolded, and that the audience really has a free choice as to what particular action she shall go through; in fact, the trick is so effective that it is well worth the little trouble entailed in rehearsing it.

Real Life Romances.

Readers are Cordially Invited to Contribute to this Feature. All Accepted Contributions, which must be True and Substantiated by Names and Dates, are Paid for.

The Outcast.

THE STORY OF A TRAMP'S GRATITUDE.



Supporting himself by the lintel, the man gasped out a pitiful tale.

"QUITE unnecessary!" her friends had said, and said it a thousand times.

But the little lady had smiled complacently, and gone about her work, doing as her conscience bade, and refusing charity to none that asked.

Yet "quite unnecessary," her friends had commented, "to impoverish yourself for a set of lazy rascals."

Not that the little lady was unaware that frequently her dollars went to swell the till of the nearest saloon and to quench the thirst of some inebriate outcast.

But she took comfort in the reflection that, out of the numbers on whom she had bestowed help, not a few there must have been who really needed it.

One day a man knocked timidly at her door. Never had the little lady in all her experience of the poverty-stricken encountered one so raggedly attired, so visibly suffering.

Supporting himself by the lintel, the man gasped out a pitiful tale.

He had been in the town since morning, endeavouring vainly to gain admittance to some hotel or tavern where he could stay the night. But at all he had been refused. His offer to pay had been scorned. When he had shown money they had declared that it was stolen.

Finally, would the kind lady, whom he had heard was so good to those in distress, take compassion on him?

To such an appeal the little lady responded in just the same manner as she had responded to many a hundred before. She invited the man into her house, and whilst her old servant hastened to make ready a room, herself brought food, and raised a roaring fire before him.

Next morning found the outcast racked with a raging fever. The little lady summoned a doctor. The case was a critical one, the physician informed her. Care only and the utmost attention might save the invalid's life. And, with an ominous shake of the head, he departed.

As she stole back into the room the man opened his eyes.

"I am dying," he gasped. She placed a cup of lemon-water to his lips, and bathed his temples with cold water. "It is all up with me"—the outcast smiled his gratitude—"would you please give me my coat?"

From a side-pocket he withdrew a package, soiled and wrapped in an old newspaper.

"I want you to take care of this for me," he next remarked. "If I live I will ask you for it again. If not I would like you to keep it for your kindness."

A week later the man died, without revealing anything of his past beyond that he had known more prosperous days. And a few days after the funeral, the little lady, thinking to find some clue to the friendless man's life, undid the paper parcel that he had committed to her care.

It contained one thousand dollars in notes—the outcast's legacy to her.

The Love Philtre.

A PARISIAN ROMANCE.

COUNT GEORGES FERADY was in love—madly in love. And the cause? well—a charming young widow, and so charming, too, that Count Georges could not find words to say half that he would. He adored, he admired, he loved her so much.

Not so the fair widow Count Georges! So the Count, to remedy this unfortunate defect in his fair Venus, betook himself to books, to study how men in distant ages managed in such a plight.

Thus he made the discovery. And the discovery was this—well, it came from a musty book dealing with ancient Greece and the Thessalonians, wherein much mention was made of a mystic concoction that they called—the love philtre.

The very thing! thought Count Georges Ferady, and clanked his spurs as only a cavalry officer can, and thereupon he retired to bed satisfied and to sleep.

Next morning the Count, his schemes formulated in the dark watches of the night, repaired to the house of a friend, whom rumour credited with some degree of madness and a passion for alchemy.

To him the Count confessed his abounding adoration for the fair widow, and her lack of that quality towards him. The alchemist listened intently. *Certainement!* love philtres were by no means beyond his ability to concoct. With this he rose, and from many bottles contrived a harmless-looking, colourless fluid, which he placed in a phial.

"This, *mon cher ami*," said the alchemist, "is a love philtre like which there is no other. Once find means to give this to *la belle madame*, and Count Georges will be all the world to her."

Elated beyond measure at the success of his schemes, the Count returned to his house, and there impatiently awaited the opportunity to complete his happiness.

It came that same evening.

Seated at dinner beside the dear lady of his heart, the small glass phial burnt very fiercely in Count Georges' waistcoat pocket. He directed her attention to an adjacent picture.

The widow followed his somewhat forcibly extended right hand with indulgent eyes.

But she did not perceive his left emptying the contents of the little phial into her wine-glass.

Victory! the widow was his. One short minute, then—what a fine fellow the widow would think him!

The glass! It was at her lips!

Oh, Georges, what a genius!

The widow's glass was empty. The Count turned a pair of rapturous eyes on her. But she! *Mon Dieu!* What was amiss? She had fallen to the ground senseless.

* * * * * *

The fair widow was nearly poisoned, and the gallant Count nearly demented. But a skilful doctor restored both.

And rumour has it that the love philtre has done its part, and a priest will do the rest.

"This, *mon cher ami* . . . is a love philtre."

A Fatal Masquerade.

THE ROMANCE OF A MAN-WOMAN.

"A MAN about thirty or thirty-three years of age, five feet nine inches in height, fair complexion, fresh, red face, light-haired, and clean-shaven. Has a high-pitched voice, and wears a light tweed overcoat and cap. Accompanying him is a small toy terrier with a blue coat, bordered with red."

Such was the description published some time ago by the police in the north of England. The man in question was "wanted" by the Stockton police on the charge of obtaining money by false pretences through representing himself as the agent of an insurance company. He usually tried to defraud solicitors, and so members of the profession were put on their guard by the police.

On a gloomy November afternoon a Burnley solicitor was called upon by an insurance agent.

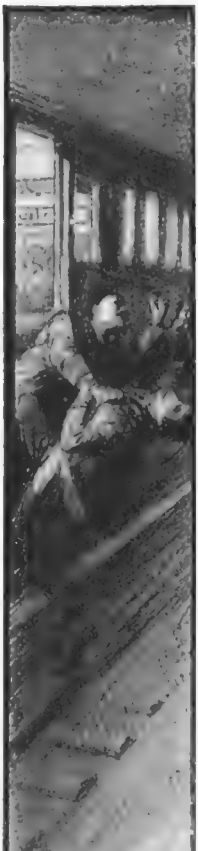
The solicitor had read a description of the man wanted by the police, and he found that it fitted the man before him exactly.

As soon as his visitor had departed, the solicitor at once communicated with the police. They quickly arrested the bogus agent.

Owing to his vigorous resistance, they were compelled to carry him most of the way to the station.

Later in the day, Detective Richardson arrived to take the prisoner to Stockton. The two were handcuffed together, and the railway journey was quite uneventful until midnight, when the train was close to Stockton.

Suddenly the prisoner, exclaiming, "This is not Stockton!" made a dash for the carriage door, dragging the officer with him.



At last the prisoner forced open the door and both fell out.

A frightful struggle then ensued.

At last the prisoner forced open the door and both fell out. The prisoner threw himself under the train, and the detective pulled him back by the handcuffs, but not before the wretched man had had one leg cut off.

He then kicked the detective away with his remaining foot, and again flung himself beneath the train. At this point the police-officer was stunned by a passing carriage.

When a search party found them the prisoner was still breathing, and implored that the handcuffs might be taken off.

Two hours later he died in the hospital. At the inquest, the doctor announced that the prisoner was not a man, but a woman of about twenty-five years of age, though her disguise was so good that the fact had never before been discovered.

The plucky detective escaped with several wounds on the head.

It was estimated that the woman made about twenty pounds a week by her frauds on the public. When living in London, she rode a thoroughbred mare in the Park, and enjoyed herself regardless of expense.

On the other hand, she had been very good to a girl friend, writing her encouraging letters, and helping her when in difficulties.

She was the daughter of well-to-do parents, and received a good education, but, being left an orphan at an early age, got into bad ways. With all her faults, however, she died hard.

Exchange is no Robbery.

AN OLD ADAGE VINDICATED.

COLD, desolate, frost-bound, the great white city lay. Cavalry, fierce, wild, Cossacks, patrolled the streets, eyeing with hatred the sullen strikers, who, talking low among themselves, bided their time with deadly patience.

This was St. Petersburg in December of last year.

A wealthy merchant, his figure enveloped in a heavy fur coat, hastened homeward down a side street.

Four men advanced stealthily towards him. Oblivious of their devouring glances, the merchant gave no thought to them.

The men drew nearer.

Then, at a preconcerted signal, they set upon the merchant. He cried out for help, but a blood-rusted dagger constrained him to silence.

"Your watch!" one, evidently the leader, demanded.

The merchant withdrew it from his pocket, and the man promptly placed it in his overcoat.

"Your money, notes—everything!" the man next demanded; and, perforce, the merchant handed them over.

"I have nothing more of value," he replied to still another peremptory demand.

Ignoring the statement, the leader of the highwaymen rifled his pockets.

The handsome fur coat next attracted his attention. "I will have that also!" he said. Then one, more scantily attired than his comrades, asked that he might have the merchant's jacket.

"I shall freeze!" the unfortunate man protested, shivering as the keen air penetrated his now thinly covered shoulders. "Can you not even spare me my jacket?"

A blood-rusted dagger constrained him to silence.

For reply, the leader of the robbers, either induced by the appeal, or a facetious humour, divested himself of his coat, and offering it gravely to the merchant, remarked, "I give you this in exchange for your coat. I am not a common robber, but we must live."

Whilst the merchant was endeavouring to button the coat about his portly form, the robbers suddenly took to their heels. Surprised, he glanced down the hitherto deserted street. A patrol of Cossacks was advancing. Fifty yards behind them a carriage slowly followed.

Calling to the driver to stop, the merchant directed the man to drive him home.

As he stepped into the conveyance something rattled metallically in his pockets. He placed a hand in each.

What was this? A watch! He looked—and looked again. It was his own! Were these men merely taking part in some practical joke? He examined the contents of the other pocket—money, notes! He recognised everything that the robbers had taken from him. Not only that, but a considerable sum besides—more than sufficient to recompense him for the loss of his fur coat and jacket.

Then the mystery was made plain to him. Was it not the leader that had denuded him of his valuables. And was it not he—no doubt in a moment of forgetfulness—who had exchanged with him his coat?

The merchant pondered over his discovery for some moments. Then a smile broke over his face.

A Dream of Bliss

Said the Doctor, "Boys, attention! I've a
new idea to mention.
And I'm sure you will agree to what I say;
For I think of introducing some new rules
of my own choosing.
And in future you will simply learn to
play.

"Oh! yes, our new curriculum will be as
lively as a 'scrum.'
And from morning until night you will be
free;
Quite unknown all impositions, regulations,
and conditions,
And you need not have the slightest fear
of me.

"In the morning do not hurry, there will be
no need for worry.
For your breakfast will be brought to you
in bed;
And while you feast you may peruse just
each or any book you choose—
Should you wish it, I will read to you
instead.

"With new cycles I'll provide you; when you
set out for a ride, you
For your pocket-money will apply to me.
I shall make no limitation, let there be no
hesitation,
To my money you will all have access free.

"When relations pay a visit, to record the
day exquisite,
A whole holiday will always be allowed;
I have made all due provision to support
this new decision,
And to entertain your friends I shall be
proud.

"Above all things I adjure you, unless satis-
fied be sure you
Make complaint to me of anything amiss,
And whatever you may mention shall receive
my best attention.
Please to have no doubt at all concerning
this."

How we cheered the innovation! How we
voiced our jubilation!
While cheer after cheer the former silence
broke.
Our loud shouting never ended till our
breath was all expended;
Then we just commenced again—when I
awoke.

Herbert J. Brandon.

A Story of Two Faithful Lovers.

By Baroness E. Orczy.

ACT I.

The Mugginses had owned the local carrier's business between Ockley and Leith Hill for several generations, but "old" Muggins had never been much of a favourite. Very little was known of him except that he delivered parcels punctually and regularly.

Now, "young" Muggins had been quite another sort, and had been ready for a chat with anyone who was willing to listen to his wonderful tales. And "young" Muggins could spin yarns, and no mistake, of press-gang and buccaneering, of Nelson, or of Waterloo, for all the world as if he had seen everything with his own eyes.

"And we did rush at them, I can tell you," he would say; "we saw Bony's white charger straight before us, and heard the Iron Duke's cheering voice ringing above the din of musketry and cannon, and I, in the foremost rank——"

At this point of the thrilling narrative Timothy Hooker, who kept the grocery store, remarked drily that the battle of Waterloo had been fought eighteen years ago, and that "young" Muggins, who was not twenty, must have been a very precocious soldier. But then Coldharbour and Ockley always had asserted that Timothy Hooker was jealous of "young" Muggins' popularity, and his oracles were not always held to be infallible.

One day "young" Muggins was not in his accustomed place at the Abinger Hatch, nor was he there the next day, nor the day after that. Where he had gone to, no one could conjecture, and Mat Hookins remarked over his glass of ale: "I wonder now where be that young Muggins?" Then other matters cropped up, the death of Jane Kelsall's cow, the fire at Upcher's barn, and "young" Muggins was speedily forgotten.

One fine day a parcel addressed to "old" Muggins was handed to the old man by the Dorking carrier; the parcel was wrapped in a shabby brown coat; it had tiny feet and a fair, very curly head. It had come all the way from London, and did not seem altogether unexpected.

After that, when anyone happened to pass "old" Muggins' cart, there was no longer silence beneath the hood as of old; an excited little voice would be heard shouting: "Whoa! Jemima! Whoa! Steady, old girl!" accompanied with such merry peals of laughter as did one's heart good to hear.

Once, when Timothy Hooker was talking to "old" Muggins about the little lad, the latter said in an awed whisper: "What did he say, grandpa?"

From which remark it was necessarily concluded that the "little 'un" was "old" Muggins' grandson.

No one thought of calling the new member of the Muggins family "young" Muggins. That name belonged to a vanished hero; but for seventeen years he was called "the little 'un," though by that time he was close on six feet high. At the end of that time "old" Muggins went to the land where there are no carriers and no parcels, and "the little 'un," whose name happened to be Pete, carried on the business after him.

He was then a fine-grown lad, not quite twenty-one, a little foolish, perhaps, and shy, but very steady and punctual in business.

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With the advent of the railway came one or two visitors to the village, artists mostly, and with them had come a great increase in business. "Pete Muggins must be doing well," said one or two of the old oracles. "Milly Hooker might do worse," added the women."

Milly Hooker, the pretty, fair-haired daughter of Timothy, the grocer, was then a very prepossessing young woman, and no one knew better how to take a parcel from the carrier than she did, with those nice dimpled hands of hers.

One day Pete met Miss Milly in the pretty beech lane outside Coldharbour. She had a basket on her arm, and was walking fast, for it was very cold. It was within a week of Christmas Day, and the great branches of the beech trees glistened with the frost, while cheeky robins, with bright red breasts, hopped merrily on the great gnarled roots, and cocked their little heads on one side as they watched Pete Muggins' mare walking leisurely along.

"Let me put that basket in the cart, Miss Milly; it's too heavy for you," said Pete awkwardly.

The snow, crisp and hard, crackled beneath the wheels and the hoofs of the nag. Milly laughed, such a pretty, chirpy laugh, as made all the robins' breasts pale with envy.

"Well, Mr. Pete," she said archly, "I must tell you that I am a wee bit tired myself; perhaps Jemima won't mind taking *me* part of the way along, too."

"Oh, Miss Milly!" was all that poor Pete could say.

He jumped down from his cart and helped to make her comfortable on the narrow seat. It was obviously not his fault that, whenever Jemima gave a feeble jerk to the reins his right arm brushed against her left one, which sent a rush of blood to his head, and made him feel as if he could scream for very joy.

It was wonderful how well Jemima understood things. It seemed as if nothing on earth that was alive could get along so slowly as that knowing old mare. She eyed the passing snails in a sleepy fashion, as much as to say: "Sorry to see you are in such a hurry; I have got to kill time in this here road."

Jemima managed to cover two miles in half-an-hour, during which time Miss Milly spoke of the coming Christmas and the approaching New Year; whilst poor Pete could only contrive to say a few "Oh, Miss Millys" and "No, Miss Millys," for which he could have laid his whip across his own back, so foolish and clumsy did he feel.

But Jemima was a knowing old mare, who had seen a thing or two in her day, and no doubt she thought that matters were progressing even more slowly than her own clumsy gait.

As it was close on three o'clock, there was every palpable excuse for her, and she really was not accustomed to seeing stoats darting across the road in front of her.

She shied, and with dexterous cunning contrived to throw Miss Milly violently against her neighbour. Pete put out one arm, the left one, to save her from falling out of the cart; and his right arm, heedless of the Scriptures, immediately followed its example. So that Miss Milly found herself very tightly pinioned, and, wonderful to relate, she seemed in no hurry to extricate herself.

Jemima, satisfied with her performance, allowed a couple of snails to pass her; then she stopped altogether.

"Oh, Miss Milly! Miss Milly!" was all poor Pete could say.

Strangely enough, Miss Milly's eloquence also seemed to desert her, for she merely sighed "Oh, Pete!"

A robin hopped into the hood and peeped down beneath it.

What he saw was evidently perfectly intelligible to him, for he winked a bright, knowing little eye, and went home for the night.

"Miss Milly! Milly, darling! I had no idea. I couldn't guess."

"What, Pete?"

"That you—that you—would care for me at all—that is—you *do* care for me, then, just a little, Milly—Miss Milly, I mean."

"Yes, Pete," said Miss Milly, burying a very red face on the broad shoulder of the carrier.

"That's all right!" thought Jemima, as she started off again at a very slow trot.

"Goodness gracious me! and here's Ockley Post-office, I must get down Mr.—I mean Pete."

"Not yet, Milly—wait a bit, do. Whoa! Jemima, whoa! Milly, it seems wonderful, I—I can't quite believe it; tell me that this is all real, Milly, and that you have actually said that you care for me."

"It's all real, Pete."

"And do you care for me enough, Milly, to—to marry me?"

"I will marry you, Pete, if you wish it."

"If I wish it? Oh, Milly! Jemima, old girl, do you hear that? Why, Milly, for

years and years, there hasn't been a day when I haven't thought of you, and talked to Jemima of you, but I didn't hope—how could I? When shall we get married, Milly?"

"You must ask father, Pete."

"I can't keep you in luxury, Milly; though I have got £30 put by for furnishing and that. We would hire Mrs. Elms' cottage, it has a nice stable for Jemima; and I have earned as much as £1 a week during the summer, when visitors are about. Can we get married on that, do you think, Milly?"

"I think so, Pete; you see, we could let two of the rooms off to visitors during August and September. But, goodness me, here's three o'clock just striking, and you won't get home by daylight."

"Milly, I want it to be night soon."

"Why, Pete?"

"I want to sit in the dark and think."

"Good-night, Pete."

"Good-night, Milly."

Jemima looked round in astonishment. She had never seen anything like it in all her life. There was that big, hulking fellow standing there, holding Miss Milly's hand, and no one in sight.

"Pete."

"Yes, Milly."

"You may kiss me if you like!"

"That's much better," thought Jemima, as she discreetly looked another way.

How Pete Muggins ever got home that night he really never could have explained. That Milly should agree to marry him, make a home for him bright and lovely with her merry laugh and her pretty, dimpled face, was a vision of happiness of which honest Pete had never allowed himself even to dream too often. And now it was real—she had said so. God is good and the world is beautiful.

It was only when, having seen to Jemima's comforts, he was alone in the little room which he hired from Mrs. Brown at The Camp, that he remembered a letter addressed to himself which had been handed to him at the Ockley Post-office. He had recognised the writing and put it in his pocket.

"Oh, Miss Milly! Miss Milly!" was all poor Pete could say.

But now he snuffed the candle, drew a chair close to the table, and broke open the envelope. "From the dad!" he murmured quietly.

"Young" Muggins had not been translated to a better sphere, as his admirers in the village had supposed. He had merely at

twenty-two years of age sought a wider field for his talents.

Apprenticed to a London builder, he soon learnt the business, and then married the daughter of his master. Four years later saw him a widower, father of a pretty boy not four years old. Remembering his home in the Surrey Hills, he sent the child to its grandfather, and continued to build houses, together with a fairly substantial fortune. From time to time Pete heard from his father; the letters never contained money, and were never prepaid, but they helped to keep father and son in close touch with one another. This one was very short, and it began:

MY DEAR SON,

Things have gone with me from bad to worse, this terrible war in the Crimea has been the ruin of trade. It has been my ruin, my boy! and at the close of my laborious, independent life I now stand, poor, ruined, a miserable creature, dependent on others for daily subsistence. What am I to do, my boy? I am too proud to beg; I am, they tell me, too old to work. I would not appeal to you but that I am starving. I have not tasted food for two days.

Your despairing father,
JOHN PETER MUGGINS.

Long did Pete sit there, with the letter in his hand, the candle smoky and snuffy, flickering faintly in the tiny room. Then, with a heavy sigh, he blew out the light, took off his clothes, and threw himself on the bed.

The next morning at ten o'clock, he was outside Mr. Hooker's shop in Ockley. From the whole length of the street Pete could see a bright bit of colour in the doorway, and his beating heart told him that Milly was watching for him.

He threw the reins across Jemima's back; his feet seemed like lead when he wanted to jump off the cart.

He took Milly's little hand in his rough brown one, and looked at her as one looks at a cherished picture which is about to fade away. He could not speak then as his throat felt swollen and stiff.

"What's wrong with you, Pete?" she asked.

He wouldn't break down before her, in the open street; he took his father's letter out of his pocket and gave it to her.

When she had read it, she asked very quietly:

"What are you going to do, Pete?"

"I was going to ask you, Milly, what I should do."

"Don't you know? You wouldn't see your father want, Pete?"

"No, Milly."

"What can you do for him, Pete?"

"You see, Milly, I am only earning twelve shillings a week in the winter and a sovereign, perhaps, in the summer, and if I have father to live with me then——"

"I see," said Milly quietly.

She seemed suddenly to have grown a great deal older. She stood there before him, so serious and so still, with an infinity of sadness in her blue eyes. He passed the back of his rough hand across his eyes, and in a minute, womanlike, she placed her small, podgy hand on his sleeve.

"We must wait, Pete," she said cheerfully. "That's all."

"Wait, Milly?"

"Yes! wait a few years. We are both very young. Who knows? the next few years might make a lot of difference, and you could afford to think of your father and not to forget me—that is," she added with the sweetest of arch smiles, "if you still wished not to forget."

"Wait, Milly darling! Do you mean to say that you would wait for a fellow like me, and——" Pete had spoken in the fulness of his heart, but here he checked himself, drew his great, gawky figure bolt upright, and added:

"No, Milly. I would not be such a wretched coward as to spoil your life for you. But, Milly, whatever may befall, I shall never marry now, for I shall never love anyone as I love you."

"I shall always love you, Pete," she said earnestly, "and whenever you come to claim me for your wife I shall be ready and waiting for you!"

ACT II.

Strangely enough, the return of "young" Muggins to his old, familiar haunts was not greeted with that overwhelming joy which his heroic reputation should have insured for him. On the whole, the little group of villagers resented more than enjoyed the home-coming of their hero. In their sleepy way, they preferred to think of him as translated to a brighter sphere; they had hugged the belief that he had only left them to consort with dukes and princes, and to give forth his world-wide wisdom in the halls of the great.

To think that that ill-clothed, ill-fed, unwashed creature, who was seen one Christmas Eve, wearily lifting his shrivelled body into "Pete" Muggins' cart, to think that *that* was "young" Muggins who had fought at Waterloo and held dying Nelson in his arms, was a shock from which the inhabitants

of Coldharbour and Ockley never quite recovered.

As for Leith Hill, it looked on with a sleepy eye at the preparations Pete Muggins made for his father's comfort. He hired Mrs. Elms' cottage, furnished two rooms and a kitchen comfortably, and got Susie Elms to "do" for him and for his father, for all the world as if the latter were an artist who came to spend the summer in the hills.

Leith Hill shrugged its shoulders, and communicated its views to Ockley, and at Ockley Mr. Timothy Hooker was an oracle, possessed of certain indisputable rights to mind other people's business. He met Pete in the Coldharbour lane one day, when the first tiny green buds peeped out on the graceful branches of the beech, and the first swallow had been spotted making for the eaves of the little village church.

Pete looked old; his tall figure seemed more gawky than ever.

"Pete Muggins," said Mr. Hooker, "I hear you and your father are living like gentlemen up there at Mrs. Elms'. Do you think you are wise to spend every penny of your earnings and not be putting by against a rainy day?"

"You see, Mr. Hooker," said Pete cheerfully, "my father has lived all his life as a gentleman. It would not do for him not to have all the comforts he has been used to, not now that he is giving me, as it were, the pleasure of living with me."

"But it isn't right that your father should live on your earnings, and prevent you getting married and settled yourself."

"Business is getting very brisk, Mr. Hooker," said Pete evasively.

Business certainly seemed brisk with Pete. Coldharbour was beginning to be a noted place, and visitors had begun to book rooms weeks in advance.

One Christmas Day Pete walked home with Milly from church. She was no longer the fresh young girl of eighteen. Her complexion was not quite so rosy as it was, and her figure had lost a little of its roundness. Still, she was a good-looking girl, and had had one or two offers of marriage in the past few years.

"Milly," said Pete cheerfully, "another couple of years like the one I have just had, and I shall have another £30 put by and be making my £1 a week quite regular."

"I shall only be thirty next birthday, Pete," replied Milly, with some of her old archness. "You won't think me too old a bride, will you?"

"Milly," said Pete, "don't, for goodness' sake, talk like that or I shall make an ass of myself."

"Then you still care for me, Pete?"

"More than earth or Heaven, Milly," he replied, with simple earnestness.

The following autumn Ockley was much surprised one morning to see Pete Muggins knocking at six o'clock at Dr. Jones' door, and a quarter of an hour later the latter worthy hastily mounting into Pete's cart and driving away with him in the direction of Leith Hill.

Leith Hill was the first to know that "young" Muggins was very ill. Some spoke of "rheumatiz," others of "failin' 'ealth." Dr. Jones called twice in one day at Mrs. Elms' cottage, and Pete looked pale and anxious.

Then Dr. Jones' visits became less and less frequent, and finally ceased altogether, and one day a bundle of rags—a pallid shred of humanity—sat outside the cottage door, shivering beneath the still warm rays of a beautiful October sun.

There were many kind inquiries for Pete about his father whenever the carrier delivered his daily load of parcels.

"He is still ailing a bit," was Pete's uniform quiet comment.

And day after day, from year's end to year's end, that same pallid shred of humanity sat, a hopeless invalid, wrapped up in shawls, outside the cottage door. Dr. Jones came at times frequently, at others he stayed away for weeks on end, but from Dorking regularly there was a bottle of medicine, or perhaps a box of powder or pills, or even a jar of potted meat, waiting for Pete Muggins at Ockley railway station.

"Must cost him five shillings a week in drugs alone," said Mr. Hooker.

"And Heaven only knows what the doctor's bills will come to at the end of the year," added Mat Kelsall sententiously.

Pete still walked home from church with Milly Hooker, who now wore a bonnet at morning service with strings tied under her chin, and who did not curl her hair any more since she had discovered a grey one in it.

"Milly, the last of the £30 went yesterday, and I owe twenty-five shillings to the Dorking chemist, and I have put nothing by for two years."

"I know, Pete, you are a good son. How is your father to-day?"

"Just the same, Milly, just the same. The doctor says that with good food and proper

"Thirty years ago," he murmured. "Milly was so pretty then."

care he may last for years. Good food is very expensive, but I do what I can."

And then for the first time he spoke that which had gradually eaten into his heart, and made him lose all joy in life.

"It's no use, Milly, not a bit of use. You are young yet. Can't you think of some nice fellow you could make happy, Milly? It's no use with me; I am getting old. I can never manage it now."

"I am getting old, too, Pete, and I cannot think of some nice fellow. I know it's no use, but I should never marry anyone else, and I don't mind being an old maid."

Sometimes "young" Muggins was ever so much better, but at others age seemed to creep very rapidly over him, still more shrivelling up his wretched body; but Dr. Jones' verdict remained the same—

"With good food and care he can last for years."

Pete Muggins, too, was ageing fast. One day Jim Hooker, Milly's brother, who was carrying on his father's business, referred to the local carrier as "old" Muggins. After that "old" Muggins stuck to him. He was "old" Muggins to the young generation of Coldharbour and Ockley, as his grandfather had been before him. Silent and taciturn now, he would sit smoking all the day beneath the hood of his cart. Every seven or eight years he bought a new mare, which he invariably called "Jemima." He had had four new mares since the day when he had first driven Dr. Jones from Ockley to Leith Hill, and it was the fourth mare which took the simple deal coffin which contained all that was left of the once heroic "young" Muggins to its final resting place in Ockley churchyard.

"Old" Muggins stood beside his father's coffin, and among the crowd there was a pleasant-looking old woman dressed all in black, with a neat bonnet tied over her snow-white hair.

That afternoon, when Pete returned to his little cottage on Leith Hill, he found a large sealed packet on the table in his parlour.

"I found this in Mr. Muggins' old coat pocket," said Susie Elms. "You know, Mr. Pete, the one he always used to wear."

Old Pete turned the packet over, fumbled

for his spectacles, and at last managed to slowly spell out the superscription:

"To my son Pete, when I am dead."

Puzzled, but strangely excited, the old man with trembling fingers broke open the many seals, and from out the packet there fell a letter and a bundle of something crisp and white which made old Pete's heart stop beating. He opened the bundle first. It contained Bank of England notes, of a date nearly half-a-century ago. There were a hundred and fifty of them, for Pete counted them, and they were for £10 each.

Half dazed, not understanding, the old fellow gazed at the bits of paper, not taking in quite what they meant. They seemed to mock him with their crisp crackling, as he fingered each one in turn.

Then he thought of the letter; mechanically he unfolded it and began to read. It was dated thirty years previously, and began:

MY DEAR SON,

I hope that the inclosed will console you a little for your father's death. I know it will come unexpectedly, and therefore you will enjoy it all the more. At first, when I came to live with you, my boy, I wanted to know if you would be a good son to me. If you had turned me away when I told you I was starving, this money would never have become yours. I had meant to let you know I had it, and then, perhaps, you and I might have lived comfortably together, but to-day, when you thought I was asleep, I heard you and Dr. Jones talking together, and he said to you: "With care and good food he may last for years." And then the thought came to me, that though you are a good son, all men are liable to temptation. Who knows, perhaps, if you expected to finger £1500 after my death, you might not always have given me that care which the doctor says is necessary in order that I should live for years.

But when I am gone you shall have the money. It may be to-morrow, it may be ten years hence, that is, if you continue to be the good son to me, and give me all the doctor prescribes for me.

May you make good use of this money, my boy.

Your affectionate father,

JOHN PETER MUGGINS.

October 18th, 1869.

The letter fell from "old" Muggins' hand.

"It may be to-morrow, it may be ten years hence," he repeated, and a great sob broke from his shrivelled old throat, while a tear began to glisten beneath the spectacles.

"Thirty years ago," he murmured. "Milly was so pretty then."

ACT III.

The visitors who were at Ockley that summer, artists mostly, said they had never seen such a quaint wedding. The little church was decorated with heather, and there was a triumphal arch outside the porch.

An artist afterwards painted a picture of the scene as the bride and bridegroom advanced hand in hand through the little churchyard. The bridegroom was a tall, gawky old fellow, with iron-grey hair and a face furrowed by years, by wind, and by weather. The bride's hair was snow-white, and her old face was rendered quite beautiful by the look of peaceful, serene happiness. Milly Hooker had waited for Pete, and when he came, grey-headed and old, to claim the promise she made him long ago, she had quietly placed her hand in his.

"I am ready, Pete," she said.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

PHŒBE'S MUFF.

Phœbe's muff is soft to hold;
Phœbe is divine.
Phœbe's hands are rather cold,
And so are mine.

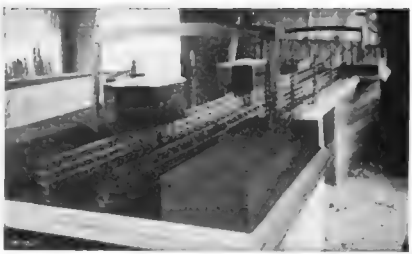
Phœbe's muff is round in form;
Phœbe's dark eyes shine.
Phœbe's hands are nice and warm,
And so are mine.

Phœbe's hand has lost a glove;
Phœbe doesn't pine.
Phœbe's thoughts are lost in love,
And so are mine.

J. BRAMMALL SHREWSBURY.

Picture - - Paragraphs.

All Readers, especially Those Living in the Colonies, are Invited to Contribute to These Pages. Payment is Made for Accepted Contributions.



Model of a projected mono-railway between Manchester and Liverpool.

MODELS FOR M.P.'S.

Miniature Constructions to Facilitate Legislature

Models are frequently submitted to Parliamentary committees in order to give them a good idea of the project they have under consideration. This practice greatly aids members serving on these committees, as they are enabled to see at a glance just what the scheme under discussion would effect if carried out.

The above model of a projected mono-railway stands on a mahogany base fifteen feet long by three feet broad; it has platforms and turntables at each end representing termini at Manchester and Liverpool.

The rails run on A-shaped trestles bearing the electrified rail on their summits and two guide rails on each side. The carriages rest on the top rail (hence the term mono-rail), from which the electric power is obtained, and are kept in position by wheels on each side.

It will be remembered that Parliament granted powers for the building of the line, which was begun some time ago

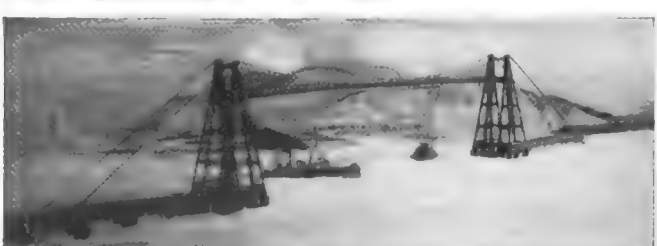
The model was made by Mr. David Bruce, and is composed of over 800 separate parts, including 134 sleepers with screws and bolts, twelve signal posts, and ten carriages.

It only took three months to make, and was certainly one of the most remarkable models ever seen at Westminster.

Mr. John T. Wood, of Liverpool, and Mr. St. George Moore, of Westminster, first conceived the notion in this country of adopting the conveyor bridge, which already had been tried with success at Portugalete, in Spain.

Both engineers visited Portugalete in 1898, and subsequently had an exact model made of the bridge, which was taken before Parliament in 1899. Power to build this type of bridge was at first refused, but eventually granted by Parliament after the promoters had spent £5000 in plans and models.

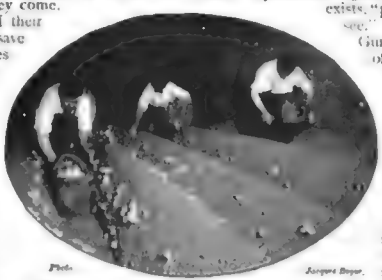
The bridge has been built to cross the Ribble.



Model of a conveyor bridge to cross the river Ribble, in Lancashire. This model is three feet in length and cost £100. The background, etc., is, of course, painted in.

GATHERING MUSHROOMS IN A TUNNEL

THE most likely place wherein to find mushrooms growing is a meadow, or a plot of grass. Occasionally they rise up in a "fairy ring" on one's lawn, for no particular reason apparently, and depart as silently and mysteriously as they come, leaving no trace of their existence behind save pleasant memories in the heart of the owner of the lawn. But in France they flourish in a superannuated tunnel. The tunnel at St. Denis, in the county or department of Seine, is no longer used for the purpose for which it was originally constructed. Now, therefore, in the shade of its walls arise regiments and battalions and army corps of mushrooms. The ground has been cut up into ridges, divided by furrows, and on all the ridges mushrooms cling in numerous colonies, amply repaying the time and labour expended by the cultivator. This singular mushroom farm has a counterpart at Edinburgh. There the Scottish Mushroom Company grow their produce in a tunnel 3000 feet long. It was originally built by the North British Railway Company, and is 60 feet below the streets of Edinburgh.



Gathering mushrooms in a disused tunnel at St. Denis, France.

A MYSTERIOUS WATER SUPPLY.

A STREAM of water which apparently flows from the heart of a tree is somewhat of a phenomenon, and would appear at first sight to be due either to an optical illusion or some supernatural agency. Yet the thing exists, "plain for all folk to see." The village of Gunten, near the Lake of Thun, in Switzerland, has the honour of possessing the peculiarity, which has existed for years. Indeed, all the dwellers in the village have become so accustomed to watering their cattle at a tank whose contents issue from a neighbouring tree, that they give way to astonishment when foreign tourists express surprise at the sight. They have, moreover, no explanation to put forward to account for the local marvel. Inquiries fail to elicit anything more satisfying than the statement that it always has been so. The solution of the problem, however, is not far to seek and is a most natural one.

A strange phenomenon. The water apparently comes from the tree.

When the supply pipe was erected it was affixed to a post of green wood. This post, without doubt, threw out roots, and in time, developed into a tree, from which, since the pipe is embedded in it, the water continues to flow,

THE WORDS OF COMMAND IN EYE DRILL

EYE EXERCISES.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO MOVE THE EYES INSTEAD OF THE HEAD WHEN READING.

THE world's history has, apparently for the sake of convenience, been divided into "Ages,"

Thus we have the "Stone Age" and the "Iron Age," and some day, if we are good, we may arrive at the "Golden Age." But the age in which we live has as yet been left unchristened, whether out of politeness or not, it is impossible to say.

Yet surely the present might well be dubbed the "Physical Culture Age!" From morn till eve, from our cold tub in the morning till we seek our couch at night, we are fenced about with exercisers, developers, jiu-jitsu, and symmetrions, till we are in despair. The modern seeker after strength goes about moaning: "There are so many of them, and they *all* say they are the best. What shall I do?"

And now Miss Bessie H. Clift, of Baling Road School, Lee, S.E., has just invented an excellent system of eye-drill. As this applies to children, however, the seeker after strength is not affected by it.

Miss Clift looked around on all the multitude of drills prescribed by a benign and well-meaning Education Department, and saw that they were all good as far as they went, but that they did not go far enough.

She perceived that, while the arms and legs of her pupils were catered for adequately, their eyes were completely neglected.

On going into her classrooms she found that, almost without exception, all the children moved their heads from the beginning of a line to the end of it when reading, instead of moving their eyes. Miss Clift at once decided to eradicate this evil practice among the young children under her care.

Drills being part, a large part, in fact, of the daily round at her school, she thought: "Why not have eye-drill among them?"

No sooner said than done.

There is a head-turning movement in the "Swedish Drill," and this Miss Clift has adapted to the eyes.

The words of command are taken from this drill, and the whole is smartly executed.

All the children's eyes move as one after a little practice, and the beneficial effect of this exercise on the eyesight cannot be overestimated.

The little pupils take an interest in the new drill, and vie with one another in performing it.

The older ones are especially proficient, and perform their evolutions with great precision. The illustrations show one of the pupils who drills particularly smartly.

A STRANGE . . . SPECIMEN OF . . MANKIND . . . .

THE Aïnos are one of two aboriginal tribes occupying the island of Sakhalin.

They occupy the southern portion of the island, and, by contact with the Japanese, are more civilised than the Guiliaks—the other tribe. Through association with Japanese fishermen, the Aïnos have been able to supply themselves with modern tools, and have learnt how to surround themselves with some comfort.

Photo Kinsley American.

A hairy Aïno of Japan.

At present, there are, in the Japanese island of Yeso, flourishing schools attended by Aïnos, and some of the most intelligent citizens of Tokio are, though they endeavour to conceal the fact, of Aïno descent.

The little man in the picture, with his long black hair and beard, has a brigandish appearance, but in reality he is of a gentle disposition. The chief thing which is noticeable about him is the long hair with which he is covered. This is peculiar to the race.

The Aïnos have a legend accounting for the fact that the Japanese can read and write while they cannot.

An Aïno and a Japanese god once dined together. While the Aïno deity, overcome by wine, slept, the Japanese god stole his grammar and alphabet

A TOMB-DWELLER OF TO-DAY. . . .

THERE died recently, in New York, Jonathan Reed, known throughout the United States as the Hermit of Evergreens Cemetery. He was entombed beside the casket containing his wife in the magnificent mausoleum where he had spent most of his time for the last twelve years mourning for her.

Though the law did not permit him to sleep in the great granite vault at night, still, all his days were spent in and about the tomb, and he had become one of the familiar sights of the great cemetery.

He had been photographed by hundreds of persons, and he took a delight in delivering short addresses to those who congregated outside his strange abode.

When his wife died twelve years ago, he made her a solemn promise that he would never depart from her as long as he lived.

Being very wealthy, he was allowed to gratify his whim. He built a splendid mausoleum, and placed his own coffin in it. The vault made a species of living-room, and in it were some pictures painted by the dead woman, her favourite flowers, and other articles which, in life, she prized.

He had no children to lament his decease.

Photo © H. Mehlig.

The wife's tomb, in which Jonathan Reed, of Brooklyn, lived until his death, a few months ago.

Mr. Wilkins, the "Shell King," in robes and crown, as he appears when lecturing.

THE SHELL KING.

An Unique Monarch.

The gentleman upon whom the title of "The Shell King of England" has been bestowed is well known to all residents in and about Portsmouth and Southsea; while the fact that a Royal Princess was on one occasion graciously pleased to accept a specimen of his work has secured for him something more than local fame.

Mr. Wilkins has devoted almost the entire leisure of a long life to artistic shell work, with the result that he has converted his residence into a palace of shells.

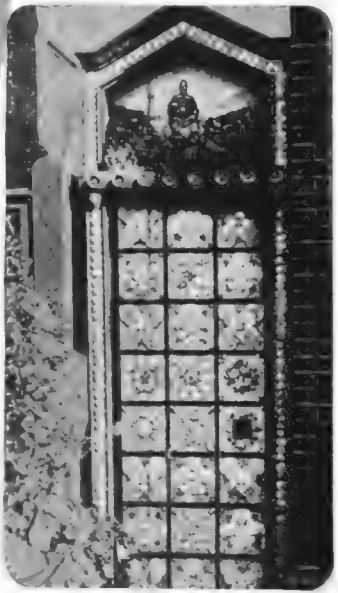
Not only is he the proud possessor of about twenty remarkable shell pictures, several of which consist of tens of thousands of specimens, all carefully chosen and arranged, but he has made for himself many unique articles of shell furniture, among which is a wonderful palm or plant stand—a triumph of cunningly contrived grottoes of coral and mysterious deep sea shells.

Perhaps the most remarkable of all Mr. Wilkins' works of art is his shell door. This achievement represents the labour of many months.

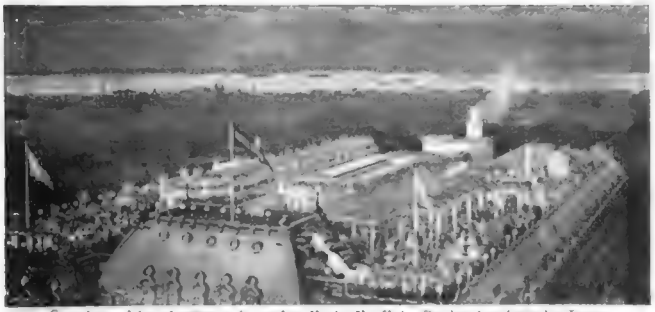
The Shell King—unlike many collectors—does not selfishly hoard his treasures.

For many years past he has always been ready to exhibit in aid of local charities and charitable institutions. On these occasions he has provided pleasant and agreeable entertainment for both adults and children.

Whenever lecturing, Mr. Wilkins wears his picturesque robes and crown, and presents a most worshipful figure.



The most remarkable of Mr. Wilkins' achievements—a shell door, which represents months of patient toil. Each shell has to be carefully inserted singly, and the process is somewhat tedious. Only a real enthusiast could have constructed this door.



General view of the roof gardens on the new Astor Hotel at New York. They have been designed on Tuscan models and measure one hundred and eighty by one hundred yards.

GARDENS IN THE AIR.

A Bright Idea from New York.

To the average Londoner of to-day the idea of sitting upon a roof to dine, or parading amongst the City's countless chimneys while listening to the strains of a fine orchestra, would seem absurd.

In New York the roof garden is a veritable paradise upon which thousands find infinite pleasure on summer evenings.

It has been left to the initiative of the big hotel proprietor, however, to exhibit the highest development of catering under æsthetic surroundings. The Hoffman, Waldorf-Astoria, Vendome, Belleclaire, Majestic, and the new Astor, which has cost £1,400,000, each have their roof garden. The latest and most luxurious is, of course, the Astor.

Here, upon an immense scale, and at a cost of thousands of pounds, has been reproduced a garden after the style made famous among the vine-clad hills of Tuscany, which measures 180 by 100 yards. A continuous walk girds the whole, and over the trellis-work of this promenade a sinuous moon-flower vine entwines itself, the blossoms of which open only after sunset. Twelve hundred feet of California privet hedge incircle the flower-beds and paths which adorn and intersect this roof Paradise.

A nearer view of the gardens. From them a splendid view of Broadway, known as "The Great White Way," can be obtained.

The Trials of a Would-be Reformer.

By Tox Gallon.

"Dens of iniquity, Fippins—sinks of carnal horror!" exclaimed Miss Emma Tilson, with uplifted hands. "In fact, I do not care to speak to anyone so inexperienced as yourself upon such a matter."

Miss Tilson coughed delicately, and closed her eyes; Fippins—housekeeper and faithful servant to that lady—closed only one eye, and said nothing. She knew, from long experience, that Miss Tilson was started on her favourite hobby, and would probably continue to ride it—in a verbal sense—for some time. And Miss Tilson's hobby being a curious one, it may be well that it should be described.

Emma Tilson, of a somewhat amiable disposition in regard to all other matters, had one rampant bee in her respectable bonnet; she had reached the age of forty years, and should have known better than to be intolerant of anything she did not understand; but she had a firm belief that all artists were—to put it mildly—loose livers, and that their studios were, as she had expressed it, "dens of iniquity." A view of certain pictures in the Royal Academy and similar places caused her to shudder, while, at the same time, they aroused in her breast a passionate wish to bring about a reform in such matters.

Perhaps a little of that trenchant feeling had been aroused by the one small romance that had touched her life. Once, some years before, a certain gentleman, well endowed with worldly goods, had aspired to her hand, had shown in an unmistakable fashion that he was deeply in earnest, and had finally proposed to her. But in an unlucky moment, just as Miss Tilson was happily yielding, he had blurted out that, although rich in the worldly sense, and with no necessity upon him to follow any profession, he was an amateur artist, and had that most horrible of possessions—a studio. On that memorable occasion Miss Emma Tilson had risen to her full height—not a very great height, for she was small and thin, but still sufficient to be imposing—and had bidden him begone. Never should it be said that Emma Tilson had linked her fate with one who had even dabbled in so desperate a calling.

From that time Miss Tilson had lived alone, save for the company of the faithful

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Fippins; and with each year had grown a burning desire to strike a blow at this enormity which clouded Chelsea and besmirched Brompton. If by any chance she could force her way into one of these places, she felt she might be able to appeal to the better nature of the abandoned creature calling himself an artist, and so reclaim one lost soul at least.

She had long lost sight of the gentleman whose unlucky confession had consigned him to a very proper oblivion; she had not greatly cared to think about him. She never saw his name in exhibition catalogues; although, if the truth be told, she had searched in secret. But one day the sight of one particular picture in an exhibition sent her trembling fingers to the address of the artist at the end of the book; she determined that she would teach this man a lesson at least. She went home, with her head literally buzzing with plans which should enable her to fling herself suddenly, as it were, into his studio, at a time when her denunciation of him would be most complete.

Fate, however, plays strange pranks; and on this occasion it played a very strange one indeed on Miss Tilson. For when she reached the building in which the studio of this obnoxious stranger was situated, and, after inquiring of the porter the direction she should take, went grimly up the stairs, that malignant Fate took her by the arm, as it were, and whisked her round in front of the wrong door. The porter had said that the obnoxious one was not in; which was exactly what Emma Tilson desired. She had said that she was a friend, and the porter had suggested that in that case she would probably find the studio door open, the gentleman having stepped out for a minute.

Behold, then, Emma Tilson gently turning the handle, finding the door yield to her touch, and entering the place of horror. A large, bare room, lighted by a huge skylight, with casts upon the walls, and canvases standing about, and with an easel or two. Miss Tilson, drawing a deep breath, adjusted her pince-nez, and advanced into the place, after carefully closing the door behind her. Looking about leisurely, she suddenly became aware of a figure with an arm raised threateningly. Miss Tilson, after a momentary start of surprise, advanced and challenged the figure. The light in the studio puzzled her a little, and she could not see clearly.

"I am here with a purpose, my good woman," she exclaimed, "and I am not to be frightened by you. You are, I take it, one of those abandoned models who are ever ready——"

She did not finish her sentence. Having, by that time, reached the figure, she saw that it was simply a lay one, staring with unintelligent eyes at her, and with a generally limp appearance. A little abashed, Miss Tilson drew back, with a foolishly muttered apology.

She walked round the studio again, and examined the various sketches—a little annoyed, if the truth be told, to find nothing of the character of the picture she had seen at the exhibition. But on that second tour of the room she came again before the figure on the throne, and was seized with an inspiration. Literally she clapped her hands, and cried out as the thought occurred to her.

"I wish to watch this monster at his work," she whispered to herself, "to see for myself all that goes on here. How can I do that, and my presence be unsuspected? The simplest thing in the world!" She pointed with a triumphant hand to the lay figure. "Let me but take the place of that, and I shall see, and yet be unseen."

Now the figure was dressed up to represent a species of female warrior—wrapped about with a huge cloak, carrying in one hand a spear, and wearing on its head a helmet. Fired with her mission, Miss Tilson had no thought of possible consequences; she merely saw here the one opportunity for which she had longed. In less time than it takes to write, her bonnet and cloak were off, and had been flung down behind the throne; the helmet was on her head, and the cloak which had covered the lay figure was about her; while that ridiculous figure itself was tossed contemptuously into a corner. Miss Tilson mounted the throne, seized the spear, and incidentally felt that the costume was not an inappropriate one for the fray in which she was about to engage.

It has already been suggested that an unkind Fate had led Miss Emma Tilson astray; and that is true enough. Instead of going to the atelier of the eminent artist who had outraged her feelings of propriety, she had been whisked into the studio of that gentle amateur—Mr. Andrew Gillman—who had once aspired to her hand. That gentleman had long ago settled down to a life of loneliness, and had devoted himself, in a very amateurish fashion, to his art; and here was Miss Tilson come once again in so strange a fashion into his life, to disturb its serenity.

Miss Tilson first became aware of her real position with the entrance of Mr. Gillman,

He was a mild, kindly gentleman, who pottered through life in his own easy fashion, and was very generally liked; always ready, above all things, to do a kindly action for a friend. And it happened on this particular occasion that he intended to oblige a younger and more struggling artist with the loan of a very important accessory from his studio.

That accessory was the lay figure. His young friend, Mr. Mark Kennett, had chanced to admire the figure and the dress some days before, when the elder man had been engaged upon an important painting; and Andrew Gillman had very willingly consented to lend it to him. Had the unfortunate Miss Emma Tilson only known, her temporary coffin lay then at her very feet, in the shape of a long wicker basket with a lid.

The shock of seeing Mr. Andrew Gillman in that place, and of realising the blunder she had made, almost froze her blood; she clutched the spear, and closed her eyes in horror. The next moment the enthusiasm born of the cause for which she was fighting fired her, and nerved her to go through anything. Mr. Andrew Gillman approached, and looked at her. She gazed at him in return out of half-closed lids and from beneath the helmet; she thought, with a little pang, that he had aged. He shook his head at her, and for a moment she thought she had been discovered; but he imagined he was merely talking aloud to his lay figure.

"I shall be quite sorry to lose you, old lady," he said; "it'll seem quite lonely, with you gone. I hope he'll treat you well; if any of those larkish boys come in one night, you may lose a finger or two, or even a nose. Ah—here he is with the men," he added, swinging round as the door opened.

Miss Emma Tilson began dimly to understand what was going to happen. Had she been in the studio she had designed to visit, she would at once have thrown off her disguise, and have made some excuse or explanation; but that, of course, was impossible in the case of Andrew Gillman. To confess that she had forced her way into his studio, and had disguised herself in order to remain in his presence, would be to suggest capitulation, and to place herself in his power—and that, too, before a stranger. No; she must look for some other way of escape.

The young man who entered the studio greeted Andrew Gillman heartily, and thanked him again and again for the loan of the lay figure. "I've got a couple of men here—the cab-driver and another," he said—"and we'll just shove her in the basket, and take her along with us at once; we needn't disturb the drapery or the helmet; it's just as I want it."

Then the real horror of the situation began to dawn upon Miss Tilson. Two men appeared, men of somewhat disreputable appearance; and Miss Tilson, afraid to speak, was seized carefully enough, and lifted into the basket. She kept her eyes closed; she only knew she was really in the basket when the back of her head bumped on the bottom of it. Then she heard voices above her, before the lid was dropped.

"Wunnerful life-like they makes these things nowadays, sir," said the cabman. "But I didn't think they was so 'eavy," he added.

"That means a tip, I suppose," laughed Mr. Gillman.

"This one's 'ad a bit o' wear in 'er time," said the other man critically. And then the lid of the basket mercifully came down.

"Those two men are making a great fuss about the weight of that lay figure," said Mr. Andrew Gillman to his friend, as they followed the basket downstairs. "I do hope there won't be an accident; that's a pretty good bump, if you like," he added, in reference to the fact that the cab-driver had let his end of the basket down somewhat heavily upon the stairs.

With the utmost difficulty the basket was hoisted to the top of the four-wheeled cab; and the man who had assisted the cab-driver bit the sixpence tendered to him as though it had been the sign and symbol of a personal affront. Miss Emma Tilson, paralysed with horror at the position in which she found herself, could only pray that she might be dealt with gently until the end of the journey, at which time it was her purpose to fling herself upon the mercy of the young stranger; to tell him the full story, and to beg that he would not tell his friend Gillman what had happened. But even that intention was frustrated by the sudden offer of Mr. Gillman to accompany his friend.

"I've nothing to do to-night, Kennett," he said cheerfully; "I'll come with you. You may not find a man at the other end to help with the basket; besides, we can have a smoke and a chat before I start for home."

"Delighted!" exclaimed Kennett. "Jump in."

Then began that remarkable progress of Miss Emma Tilson down the King's Road, Chelsea. Mr. Gillman's studio was in the neighbourhood of Sloane Street; Mark Kennett lived in West Brompton. Therefore the

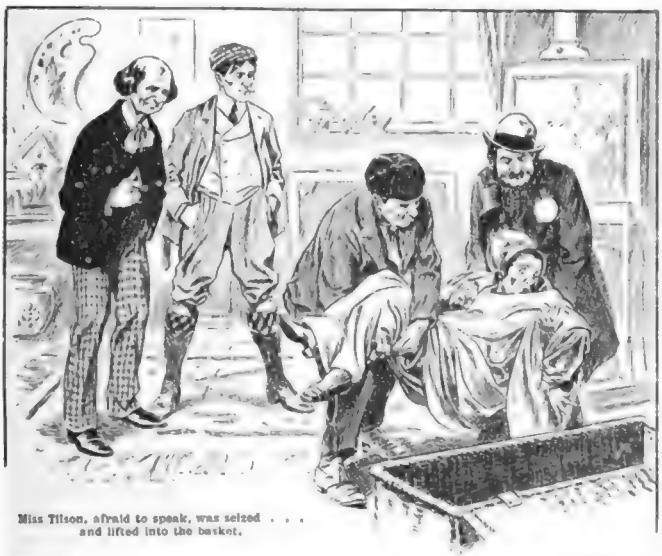
direct line of route for that innocent-looking cab, with the long, wicker-work basket on the roof, was down King's Road. And for the first quarter of a mile or so nothing happened.

As a matter of fact, nothing would have happened until the end of the journey, had not Emma Tilson been consumed with curiosity as to what sort of vehicle she was on or in. She thought she had heard the word "cab," and she had certainly been bumped about a great deal in the course of removal; and it was equally certain she was travelling now. In any case, she was in a very cramped position, and she desired air. Very cautiously she pushed up the lid of the basket, and at the same moment raised her helmeted head.

That was the sight which met the eyes of a small boy on the roof of a passing omnibus. The small boy saw the lid of the basket raised, and the head of a respectable female, with a property helmet on, peering out of it. The boy uttered a wild shriek that drew all eyes in his direction, and incidentally in the direction of the basket on the roof of the cab. Miss Tilson, recognising the mistake she had made, dropped herself and the lid hurriedly, and lay quiet.

But the mischief had been done. The frantic arm of the boy had pointed out the basket; a dozen eyes had seen the apparition. While the unconscious Mr. Gillman and his friend Kennett chatted comfortably inside the cab, the throng grew and grew; omnibuses and other vehicles pressed as near as they dared, and one facetious driver tapped the lid of the basket smartly, and begged that "good ole Rool Britannia" would have another look at him. Miss Tilson, feeling a growing faintness stealing over her, and recognising the utter impossibility of going on any further, suddenly did three things all at once. She flung open the lid of the basket, sat up in her prison, and burst into tears.

Still the brother artists inside the cab chatted pleasantly, totally ignorant of what was happening on the roof; and by this time



Miss Tilson, afraid to speak, was seized . . . and lifted into the basket.

the crowd had assumed tremendous proportions. To add to the difficulty, poor Miss Tilson, in endeavouring to attract the attention of the driver, discovered, to her dismay, that he was deaf; and the frantic shouting of other drivers, to call his attention to the extraordinary figure on the roof of his vehicle, merely induced in him the belief that some impudent boy was enjoying a free ride behind, and caused him to slash his whip around them was pointing excitedly at the roof, and that the greater part were in convulsions of laughter. Then willing hands opened the doors, and Mr. Gillman and his friend jumped out into the road.

In a scene of intense excitement, Miss Tilson, with as much dignity as she could command, stood upright, stepped out of the basket, and in that way descended to the ground. She had quite forgotten the helmet,

Mr. Gillman assisted the lady into the cab, and . . . the vehicle went on.

round contemptuously, without turning his head.

Exactly how far the comedy might have been kept up it is impossible to say; but a policeman at last laid forcible hold of the horse and stopped it. A head appeared out of each window to demand the reason; and the friends suddenly discovered that they were in the midst of an immense mob of pedestrians and vehicles, and that everyone and the faces of the friends as they looked at her were studies. As one in a dream, who felt that he had in all probability wakened in another world, and found his former goddess a new sort of goddess, Mr. Gillman assisted the lady into the cab, and, with a final rousing cheer from the crowd, the vehicle went on.

Nor would the crowd leave it. Eager faces pressed at the windows, and a yelling mob

pursued it. The sight of a lady in a cloak and helmet, and with tears streaming down her face, riding with two astonished-looking gentlemen in a four-wheeled cab, was strange enough; but that she should have previously chosen to ride upon the roof of that cab in a basket was more remarkable still. When at last they reached Mark Kennett's studio, it was with some difficulty that a lane was made from the road to the house: and down that lane walked Mr. Gillman, with the face of a man in a trance; on his arm was the lady in the helmet. Behind them came the perplexed cabman and the young man, bearing the basket. Then the door closed (after the cabman had been paid and dismissed); and that was all, so far as the crowd was concerned.

Meanwhile in the young man's studio the now repentant and subdued Miss Tilson was entering upon explanations, while she was being revived with tea prepared by her host. Every now and then that host found it necessary to dive with much suddenness into his bedroom, there to roll about and pound the pillows in a vain endeavour to control his laughter.

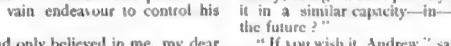
"If you had only believed in me, my dear Emma," said Mr. Gillman, "all this would never have happened. I never had a model: I am too poor an artist—in other than the pecuniary way—to dare to ask anyone to sit for me. My lay figure has been all in all to me, in that sense."

"I have been very foolish, I know, Andrew," said the lady, looking dejectedly at the helmet which lay upon the floor. "But I have been punished—as I think you know. When I remember how I sat in that basket, and looked at the horrid crowd—oh, I shall never, never hold up my head in public again!"

Mr. Gillman coughed, and looked at the lady. It being one of those occasions on which Mark Kennett was pounding his pillows, he had the coast clear; he took the lady's hand.

"My dear Emma," he said, "I really think you want someone more experienced in the world than yourself to look after you. After all, lay figures have their good points, but adaptability and flexibility are not among them. You have worn the dress charmingly to-day, though a little publicly; will you wear it in a similar capacity—in—in private for the future?"

"If you wish it, Andrew," said Miss Tilson meekly.



THE EDITOR.

Who is it that some flaw detects
And all my manuscripts rejects?
I wonder what the man expects—
The Editor?

♡ ♡

Who makes me rave and tear my hair,
And fills my heart with dull despair,
With whom no tyrant can compare?
The Editor.

♡ ♡

Who rules in undisputed sway,
And scatters all around dismay,
Rejecting poems all the day?
The Editor.

Why does he say that he presents
To me his fulsome compliments?
For which my inmost heart resents
The Editor.

♡ ♡

But what is this that meets my eye?
A letter? Failed again? But why?
"Your poem is accepted by
The Editor."

♡ ♡

All praise from my unworthy pen
To him with wisdom meet for ten,
The sweetest and the best of men,
The Editor.

H. J. B.

THE STAY-AT-HOME GIRL

How Three Girls Made Money with a Capital of only £15.

By Erroll Stanhope.

So many things are written and so many plans are planned nowadays for the amateur to make more or less large incomes out of no experience whatever. I myself have long ago come to the conclusion that money is worth a lot, but experience is worth much more.

The girl of to-day has a lot of things done for her—on paper. She is told of the money other girls make by combing old ladies' pet dogs, washing ditto dittos' indiarubber plants, keeping bicycles oiled, cleaned, and in order (this last from America, where everything truly marvellous has birth), and so on *ad nauseam*. If she does not like to be a governess, a hospital nurse, or a lady's companion, there are endless businesses open to her.

But there are many hundreds of girls who, if they were *starving*, could not be commercial travellers. Brought up in the quiet seclusion of a home, the thought of asking strangers to give them orders for tea or advertisements for encyclopædias would seem like a nightmare; and if, under great pressure, they consented to try for *one* day, the brusque, impolite, perhaps rude refusals of half-a-dozen people would so completely crush the spirit of the average girl that she would not have the heart to try again.

Mind, there *are* girls who succeed as canvassers and travellers and do very well indeed, but we are not dealing with them. They are the keen, determined ones who have been brought up, perhaps, in a family where father and mother and all were "in business." They take to trade and barter generally as to the manner born. Those girls are settled.

Then there are the girls whose parents pay heavy fees for them to be taught market and scientific gardening, fruit farming, or cooking. Those girls are settled also. If they have any desire to work and make their own livings, they have a good paying profession at their finger-ends. I am dealing now with the "stay-at-homes"—the average middle-class girls who have been educated fairly and brought up to believe themselves gentlewomen on an income sufficient to support a shepherd; the girls who know nothing of business, know no one in business, and have no one to help them in any way.

Bound to stay at home (nursing vague dreams of "going on the stage," oh, refuge of the ignorant!), seeing little or no society, having neither the pocket-money nor the smart clothes that other girls have, helping in the house-work probably, and fading in the end to a vague, dissatisfied spinsterhood, to wend a lonely, colourless way through existence (you cannot call it life), and disappear finally, unknown, perhaps unmourned.

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Ada, the eldest girl, wrote short stories and articles for the Press —

This sounds overdrawn—but is it? Look among the women of your acquaintance, and see how many there are of this description. Those who "never had a chance," those who "were not clever enough," or those who "couldn't do anything."

No, I don't pretend to have found a solution of this great feminine question, but I do think there are many ways in which girls and women could bring a little brightness and money into their lives with a good bit of hard work and a little commonsense. I have before me a treatise on fruit-growing for amateurs. It is intended for women for a great part, and women amateurs who take up fruit-growing do so for profit. If they want profit it is a guaranteed thing that they have no money. In that case, what is the good of referring to "glass houses, eighty by twenty, heated night and day to seventy degrees"? Think of the expense of that alone!

Then you turn to chicken farming for girls. Read through to the end and you will find an outlay of over fifty pounds to begin with. That's no good!

I mean to try to demonstrate how three girls, living at home in a dull country village, made three separate professions pay. I won't say "pay thousands," but I will say—pay enough to give them pocket money, nice clothes, and a general feeling of independence, to say nothing of better health and spirits, which always come with regular and paying work.

Once upon a time there were three girls. Their names were Ada, Grace, and Gwendolyn, and they lived in a dark (also damp) country-house surrounded by meadows. Their father had a small business in the town which yielded just enough to keep them, as it had "gone down very much," a distressing habit with businesses, and their mother was a partial invalid. They were aged respectively 26, 22, and 19, they were neither accomplished nor particularly diligent, and they looked forward to an endless vista of years full of vague longings for possible husbands, and equally blank certainties of not finding any.

Not that they pined in any particular way for husbands, but in such a thing at least there would be "a change" and a possible break in this deadly monotony.

Ada yawned. She wore glasses, and when she yawned they dropped off.

"Oh, bother!" she said, "I am so tired of doing nothing."

"So am I," said one sister.

"So am I," echoed Gwen, who was darning the tablecloth.

"I wish we could make some money," said Ada.

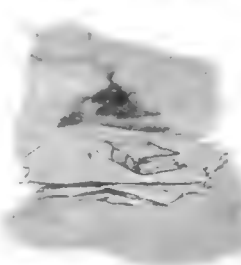
"So do I," said Grace.

"Well, why don't we?" put in Gwen.

"I might be a writer if someone would buy my stories, and if I had a little peace to write in," grumbled Ada.

"I might breed prize dogs, if I *had* any prize dogs," added Grace.

"We *might* do nothing if we sit here till



—Her work soon paid her at the rate of £3 3s. 0d. a week.

we are grey, and that is for a certainty what we shall do," concluded the youngest sister.

"Then let us work," cried Ada, getting up briskly and speaking loudly.

"That's easy for you—you *can* with stories. *We* can't."

"What's the good of writing them if editors won't take them?"

"Go and see the editor," hazarded Gwen.

Ada pondered for a while.

"That's not a bad idea. I hate going to see strangers, but the editor of the *Weekly Flasher* can't be a very terrible man, can he? One reads of these fearful London editors who have spring traps to throw you downstairs, and never come and see you, but down here it can't be so bad.

"Well, supposing I go and see him and ask him to read a tale, there'd be no harm done, would there?"

"None whatever. But what becomes of us?" said Grace.

"Well, what could you do?"

"Nothing," putting her feet up on the opposite chair.

"You spoke of keeping chickens once."

"Yes, but when I got the book and read all about it, it cost a fortune to begin with. Why, I have only £5 in the world," said Grace.

Ada bent her brows behind her glasses.

"Why not start with £5, then?" she said.

"How can I? You have to have fosters and brooders and runs and wires and——"

"Yes, but millions of people do without all that. Katie Burns makes quite a lot out of chickens, and *she* never had all those things."

"If you go by the book, the best thing to buy is a motor engine to collect the eggs of the chickens you have not bought yet," sarcastically said Gwen.

"No, that's true: Katie never had the money, had she? But then she sells table fowls. I don't know how to fatten fowls, and all that."

Ada felt a light breaking over her.

"I feel sure," she said, addressing her two sisters, "we can make a bit of money if we put our heads together and *determine* to do it."

"We are determined," cried both sisters, who had great faith in Ada.

"Well, I have £4 10s. You, Grace, have £5, and what have you got, Gwen?"

"I have £5 10s., I think."

"Well, that makes £15 altogether. Now, are we agreed to spend that?"

There was a moment's pause, and then the others said "Yes."

"You have both got more than I, but still my outlay is less than yours, so you can have the remains of mine to go towards yours. Now, I will write tales—I am not very good at them, but I may get better, and in time I may sell them—you, Grace, can keep chickens (goodness knows, the field is big enough), and Gwen can have the garden."

"Why, it is overgrown with weeds since we could not have John to dig it."

"Part of your money will go to John to dig it up. You can then grow tomatoes or anything else that is cheap to buy and we can sell, and the rest of the garden you can inclose and keep rabbits and pigeons in."

Grace became vastly interested.

"Do you think I could sell them?" she said.

"We can see. Before we actually start we will find that out, but other people can, so why should not we?"

"And what do you think I could do with chickens?"

"Sell the eggs only, and when the hens were going off laying, fatten them and sell them."

"I might do that; there are always advertisements in the paper from the market for fowls, and I could send the poor things alive, and need not kill them."

"No, and they will send the crates for them, remember. I read that."

"Yes, but who is going to help me? I can't build houses for them and shift them when the grass is worn down——"

"No, and I can't afford John always out of my £4, and who will help me dig when he is not there?"

"We will all help each other. I really only want four hours a day to write—it hurts my eyes if I work longer, so I might as well work, say, from tea till supper time, six to ten. In the mornings you and I, Gwen, will help Grace, because fowls want attending to early, and in the afternoon you and I, Grace, will help Gwen with the gardening and the rabbits."

"We shall have to spoil our hands, but still that can't be helped," mused Grace, who was rather vain of hers.

"Never mind, Cuthbert can help make the fowl houses—you only want one to begin with." Cuthbert being the doctor's son, who cherished a great admiration for Ada, and could be made to perform wonderful feats of strength and endurance under her approving gaze.

And as this is a perfectly true narrative, with no misleading details and no exaggerated methods, this is the way those three girls went to work.

Grace set up as a poultry-keeper, and in a short time earned a fair profit——

Ada, to begin with, went to the editor of the *Weekly Flasher*. He was not a bad sort of man (when she did see him), but he said her style of work was not at all in his line. If she liked to write up a treatise on the turnip fly, now, he would be pleased to consider it.

Ada felt desperate. As the editor turned to leave her she said faintly: "Would it be too much to ask you—do you know an editor whom this class of story would suit?"

The *Weekly Flasher* stopped a moment.

"I should think it would do for Simmonds' column. Send it to the *Harmony Budget* and ask for Mr. Simmonds. Good morning."

Ada did so. She mentioned in a terse note that the *Weekly Flasher* had suggested her sending it, and then waited patiently for an answer.

It came—together with the little story—in three days.

Mr. Simmonds politely declined it as being too long and tedious. Anything shorter, smarter, and more up-to-date he would be pleased to consider.

Now, Ada started the proper way to write. She did not begin by being in love with herself and her work. She thoroughly made up her mind to make money by writing, and therefore if she wrote a story—no matter how good *she* thought it was—if the editor returned it saying, "Cut it down to one half, I will then give you £1 1s. for it," she immediately set to work to cut it down as requested.

The consequence was she sold it. Then she determined to be regular. To send three stories for one week, and none at all for two months, was not the way at all. She wrote, at the very least, four tales a week. Some were bad, some were middling, and several were good.

How did she get the ideas? Well, she kept her eyes open, wrote of the villagers, their quaint sayings and fancies. Retold the country-side legends, Slipped into fairy-land, gave a scrappy account of chasing Grace's hens. Endless subjects came up, and the more she wrote the easier it came. Writing *as she did* (mind, there is a vast difference in writers and writers), writing as she did to supply the ever-growing demand for cheap, harmless, short stories to fill the little penny weeklies, is not a gift and an inspiration. It is a habit, a custom, a method.

Regularly as the clock struck six, Grace cleared the tea-things, and Ada was left in undisturbed possession of the room. At ten o'clock she came forth, and until she came out of that room no one went near her.

At first she made 10s. 6d. a fortnight. That is, she sold one tale a month at £1 1s. This was not all profit, because she had to pay the typewriter out of it. She made it a rule never to send anything out unless it was typewritten, and sent it in long foolscap envelopes. No rolling up with string ties or fastened with ribbons!

Success did not come all at once, but you would be surprised how soon it did come. When I last heard of her she was regularly selling one story a week at £3 3s., and every now

——She found Buff Orpingtons a satisfactory breed.

and again a big article (on some subject she understood) which she had illustrated with photographs and for which she got £10 or £12.

Now we will turn to Grace. It had cost her several sighs to make up her mind to spoil her hands, but seeing Ada set her shoulder to the wheel so determinedly, she put her vanity in her pocket and started with a will. First she dug up about a pound of earth from the field and sent it to a paper that deals with such matters.

She wanted to know what sort of fowls would thrive best on that kind of ground. The answer came back in due course. Buff Orpingtons. She was glad of this for three reasons. Buff Orpingtons do not stray much. They have white legs, which is more esteemed in a table fowl, and they lay large, brown eggs; and although they are very apt to become broody in the spring and summer, there was the chance of selling one or two of them as broody hens.

While she waited to know the kind of fowls to have, she had the hen house built. It was a strong wooden house with a front that opened into a fair-sized, covered run. A door was at the back for her to open and clean out the house, and the floor she strewed with peat moss, which answered more than one purpose. If a hen laid an egg on the ground (which occasionally it did), it lay on the soft moss and was not broken.

It took fully a week for the birds to soil the moss enough for it to be taken away, so that saved a lot of dirty daily work, as she had merely to rake it over, and the finally saturated peat moss became very valuable manure for Gwen's tomato beds. On each side were laying boxes in which the hens generally deposited their eggs. Later in the spring, when they started to sit, she took them away to the big tool shed in peace and quiet.

Now the hen house, put up by the united efforts of John and Cuthbert, cost £3. It was a serious outlay, but could not be done cheaper, as she had a corrugated iron roof put on, to begin with. It was the driest, warmest, and longest-wearing material of all. She inquired about tarred felt and tarred wood, but, as everyone advised iron roofing, she paid the extra and had it.

Then she bought her fowls. Selecting a large fowl breeder, she bought sixteen fowls and two cocks of him for which she paid 3s. 6d. each, or £3 3s. These were fine, healthy, pure-bred birds, and she knew she could rely on their being young.

She avoided job lots of cross-bred or cheap consignments of barn-door fowls, because they are never so good in the end. A judicious cross between two pure strains is sometimes of great advantage, but for the purposes that Grace wanted them, well-bred stock was the best. Then she had to reckon their food in. They ate 3lb. of chicken mixture of Indian corn and wheat per week, and early in the morning (Grace fed them at 6 in the summer and 7.30 in winter-time—or as soon as it was light) they had a warm breakfast of barley meal, scraps from the house, and one ounce of crushed bones per fowl.

She got the bones raw from the butcher and crushed them in a bone-crusher that cost her 12s. 6d., and was a great expense. After breakfast she left her fowls out in a field to scrape and pick as they pleased. The field was a large one, and she had it wired with a movable wire fence down a third of it. This prevented the hens from wandering over the whole field, and then every six months she moved them to a fresh piece. That did double duty by preventing the hens living on sour ground and thereby getting diseased, and giving the grass time to recover, with the help of a little lime she scattered over the ground to sweeten it.

Her first customer was the milkman. He took her eggs in odd numbers and paid her the smallest price.

When she got more into business ways she went to town and tried to get a better market. After a while she got orders from a club and two hotels.

They ordered three dozen a week and, on condition she sent good-sized eggs, they paid her full price, that is, 2s. 6d. a dozen in the winter, going down to 2s., 1s. 9d., 1s. 6d., and 1s. At 1s. they seemed to stick a long time, but in the autumn they began to rise again until, from November to February, she was getting 2½d. for every egg she sold. The first hen that went broody she sat on a siting of eggs which she bought for 4s. 6d. This was better than using those laid by her own hens, as the bought ones were then unrelated.

The little chicks were out in the beginning of March, and had started laying on their own account the following October. The earlier they were hatched out, the earlier in the autumn they started to lay. Then, when her original hens began to give up laying (in their third year) she penned them into a small wired run that she kept to put the little chickens in for safety from the cocks and cats, and fattened them up for three weeks. Then the man from the market sent a crate for them, and Grace saw them no more.

Gwen, the youngest, determined to make the garden, hitherto uncultivated, pay—

For the twelve she sent, he returned her £1 2s. 3d., that was 2s. each for five of them and 1s. 9d. for the others.

Grace did not make the same amount of profit as Ada just at first, because the money she had saved had to go towards buying more eggs and coops and food, etc. But in the end she prospered, and Ada's time and part of her earnings helped her sister in the earlier stages.

Now we will turn to Gwen.

As she stood at the back door and surveyed the wild, uncultivated waste of garden before her on a dull January day, her heart sank.

She felt her task was the hardest of the three, and her profit would in consequence be less. "I wish I could sit indoors and write like Ada, or that my garden was as clear as Grace's field. I should know how to begin then."

John arriving with a spade cut her meditations short, however, and she set to work to see where he should begin. Down one side of the garden ran an old, high wall fronted by a broad bed. That was the spot—sheltered from harsh winds and getting all the sun that was in the place. John was soon busy striking deep into the brown earth and sending weeds and clods flying on to the path. There were a few gnarled and antiquated plum trees clinging desperately to the brickwork, but these had to go. They harboured insects and slugs, and it was safer to lime-wash the brick wall and start fair.

Then she turned her attentions to a frame that she bought, which cost her 10s. second-hand, and was heated by a small oil lamp under hot water. By this means she raised her seeds in heat, and, hardening them off as the days became warmer, planted them safely at last—a very hardy row indeed. Gwen only began with tomatoes, but as money began to circulate in the little household and business began to flourish, she added lettuces and by-and-by a choice apple tree or two and a winter pear.

The centre strip of garden she surrounded with a stout wire fence, which John had to bury eighteen inches in the ground. The weeds she did not attempt to do away with; she put a row of wooden hutches with sloping zinc bottoms on bricks, and over them again, supported on rough posts, a wide tarred felt roof to keep her rabbits warm and dry in the rainy weather, as nothing kills rabbits quicker than damp.

Into this space she turned eighteen bunnies, which dug and scampered, and bred exceedingly well. She fed them only once a day on a good dry food, and gave them occasionally some dried peas that had been left in water till they sprouted. In the summer, of course, the odd vegetable shoots and pieces of cabbage fell to their lot also, and, in the autumn, the fallen apples.

—With the help of John, she very soon prospered, and made a substantial amount of pocket-money.

The milkman was also her first customer. He gave her 8d. for a small rabbit and 10d. for a larger one, and owing to keeping her rabbits healthy and well-fed, she soon had more orders than she could execute.

Then, last of all, came the pigeons. There was a tumble-down loft over the coach house, and, with the combined efforts once more of John and Cuthbert, it was made watertight and comfortable.

It took a good deal of thought and consideration to do this, for the loft was a large one and in a very dilapidated state. Of course, the easiest way would have been to buy a new scientifically-arranged pigeon cote or loft, or at least to go to the local timber merchant and order new floor-boards.

But all this was out of the question. Cuthbert's assistance was called in over the matter and, struck by a brilliant thought, he reminded Gwen that at the bottom of the meadow was an old disused shed which at one time had sheltered the cow.

"That is no good, so with the boards we can mend the floor and with the tiles we can mend the roof," he said.

Poor Gwen! She carried the tiles for him, and before she had done three hours' work the skin was off both hands. If you don't believe me, try handling tiles yourself.

However, all that was part and parcel of the whole business, and when it was finished (although one could hardly call it symmetrically beautiful) it was warm and weather-tight. Luckily, pigeons are not so fastidious over the colour of their floor-boards as human beings.

Perches were arranged down the length of the loft so that the birds in resting would not feel the draught that came from the two windows—or, rather, places for windows—which were at either end of the room.

One faced north, one south, and the north window had a piece of strong sacking nailed over it, so that, while being used for ventilation, no hint of the cold north wind could enter.

The south window was left open except in the very cold weather, when it was partially boarded over because, although pigeons are active, outdoor-living birds, they must be kept warm when they roost.

The floor should properly have been sanded, but sand was expensive and capital small, so Gwen sprinkled the floor with dry earth, which she swept up at intervals, and it all went to assist the tomato beds.

Six pairs of pigeons started life in the loft, and Gwen's method with them was this: As soon as the hen started sitting, she covered her away from the others with a little coop. Under this coop the two young were born, and from out of that coop they never came. For twenty-one days the parents fed them until they were great fat squabs, with their feathers just nicely covering their hitherto bare bodies. Then she sold them. The poulterer was willing to give her 6d. each, and even more sometimes, as, being young, fat, juicy birds, he could always sell them again.

A young pigeon fattens on its mother's milk—"pigeon-milk" as it is called—and after a while begins to pick up for itself.

At the end of about three weeks it finds its wings are feathered and it tries to fly. If you let it, it grows thin again and all your profit is lost, as no one wants to buy thin birds. So never let it fly.

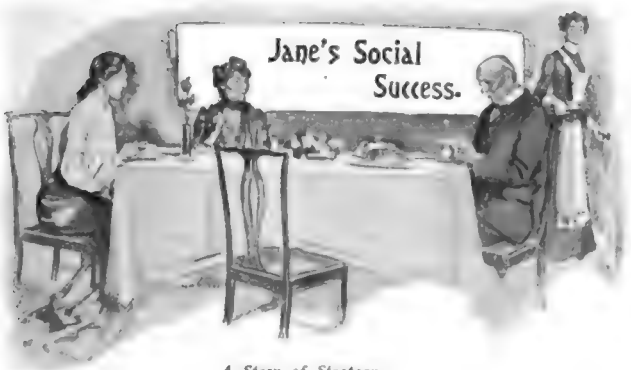
Of course, Gwen, having really three branches to attend to, could not go in for each in such a large way. She had to make one pay with the other, forasmuch as the fruit and vegetables brought in nothing till the late summer and autumn, so the rabbits paid best in the winter and spring, when they were more seasonable.

I think I may now say that I have demonstrated to you that these things *can* be made to pay even if you begin in ever such a small way. The small way brings the small profit, but many girls living at home, idle and moping, would be content to make £20 a year to begin with. Once you've started in a whole-hearted, business-like, determined way, and see ever such a small profit in return for your labours, the rest is easy. It expands and increases, and you keep adding and adding until, before you know where you are, you have a nice little profession or business.

Other people do it—why can't you?

SUMMARY OF EXPENSES.

	£	s.	d.
Ada's outlay of paper, stamps, and typewriting	1	0	0
Fowl-house	3	0	0
Eighteen fowls	3	3	0
Fowl wire	1	0	0
Bone crusher	0	12	6
Rabbit hutches	0	10	0
Rabbit wire	1	0	0
Man, one week	1	0	0
Eighteen rabbits at 1s. 6d. ...	1	7	0
Six pairs pigeons ...	0	18	0
Seed raiser	0	10	0
Fowl food for one month ...	0	3	2
Rabbit food ditto	0	2	6
Pigeon food ditto	0	2	6
	£14	8	8



A Story of Strategy.

By Helen Smith.

Jane began to stir her coffee nervously, when the maid brought in the morning letters. Across the room she recognised the uncompromising business envelopes, and trembled to think of the big bills she had run up. She thought of recent purchases, and she shuddered. Her father began to open the envelopes grimly. Her mother looked reproachfully at her.

"How many seasons is it since you came out, Jane?" asked Mr. Crawford suddenly.

"Er—er—several," gasped Jane.

"Um—m. Do you get any fun out of it at all, Jane?" he demanded.

"No," said Jane drearily. "I hate it!"

"Give it up then. I can't afford this extravagance much longer. Your mother keeps saying 'Wait.' For what?"

"Jane has been a failure socially," sighed Mrs. Crawford. "To think a daughter of mine should be so unpopular!"

She began to weep in a lace handkerchief.

"Well, we have got to cut down this tremendous expense!" said Mr. Crawford, with a motion towards the pile of bills

Jane appeared guilty.

"I'm so sorry," she said remorsefully. "You have spent a lot of money on me, and I ought to have been a success, but I don't seem to become popular. Heaven knows I've tried hard enough! But I might just as well be a lamp-post in Ipswich as in society!"

"You are really good-looking and rather clever," admitted her mother; "but you haven't been taken up at all. The other girls got on well and married brilliantly."

"My sisters never forget to mention the fact," said Jane bitterly. "But I think it is too much when you twit me with being a failure. I shall do something desperate soon!"

"Don't let it take the form of ordering any more clothes just now," cautioned Mr. Crawford, as he rose to leave the table. "I'm hard pressed to make both ends meet, but I can hold my own if you don't bankrupt me with your bills for hats and finery."

With this shot he disappeared from the room.

"Jane," said her mother desperately, "you can't go on like this for ever."

"If I hadn't been brought up so absurdly, I could go out and do something," said Jane. "Now you reproach me because I haven't captured a millionaire."

"What you need, Jane, is a start. You get invited everywhere on account of your family; but when you get there you are unnoticed. There was dear Lois, the most popular girl in her set."

Jane gave a sniff of rage.

"She hadn't a single sensible idea in her head!" she declared. "I never saw anyone so utterly frivolous. I'm glad I'm not like her!"

"You couldn't be if you tried!" answered

Mrs. Crawford angrily, for her daughter Lois had been her pet.

"Yes, I could!" answered Jane rather disdainfully.

"I wish you would try, then," said Mrs. Crawford sarcastically.

"I will!" declared Jane.

Her mother smiled incredulously.

"Indeed?" she queried, and swept from the room.

Jane cried all that morning in the seclusion of her own room, not even appearing at luncheon. She studied herself in the mirror when she had bathed her eyes, and put on an attractive gown late in the afternoon, and arrived at the conclusion that it was merely an accident that she had never been noticed in her social career. Popularity, she decided, was a trick, a knack. As there were tricks in every trade she decided she had been playing the game too squarely.

Calmly, after the storm had passed, Jane sat down and thought it all out carefully. Such an effort was not without results, and the very daring of her scheme brought fire to Jane's eye and colour to her cheeks.

At the dinner-table she was really brilliant, and no reference was made to the little talk of the morning.

The next day Jane spent in composing and making fifteen copies of the following note, a different name beginning each copy:

My Dear Mr. Blank,

Could you make it convenient to call on me next Thursday evening? I shall be alone, and there is something I wish to talk to you about confidentially. You will pardon this slightly unconventional request, but you will find the reason that prompts it ample excuse. You are so clever, I can think of no one who will do instead.

Sincerely yours,

Jane Crawford.

Fifteen duplicates of this note were slipped into fifteen envelopes bearing the names of the fifteen eligible men in her set. She posted them with a smile of infantile guilelessness, and awaited developments.

By various posts in the course of the week came fourteen acceptances—the fifteenth man sending a regret that he was just starting for the Continent, and wouldn't return for three weeks.

Jane threw out hints to her mother which kept that lady on the alert with curiosity.

On Thursday evening Jane made an elaborate toilette. Then she sat down in a nervous chill and waited. At last the maid brought up a card. Jane looked at it in awe and admiration, for few masculine cards came her way. Though she sent word that she would be down as soon as possible, she calmly seated herself before her mirror and smiled serenely at the vision that gazed at her.

Her mother entered her dressing-room in a flutter of excitement.

"Jane! Do you know that Ralph Adams is downstairs—to—call—on—you?" She spoke the words impressively.

"Certainly," answered Jane coolly.

"Then why are you sitting up here? Go downstairs immediately."

Jane looked out from beneath her dark lashes.

"Be calm, mother. Your spinster daughter is about to become popular. It will surprise you how popular."

Jane chuckled at her thoughts.

Mrs. Crawford gazed at her daughter hopelessly.

"You can't leave Mr. Adams sitting down there alone much longer," she snapped.

At this point a maid entered.

"He isn't alone, now," smiled Jane wickedly, reaching for the little pasteboard. "Mr. Graison is with him."

"Jane! You don't mean to tell me Tom Graison has come to call on you?"

Mrs. Crawford sank into a divan overwhelmed.

Jane glided from the room.

The two occupants of the drawing-room rose as she entered. In giving each her hand, Jane managed to convey an appealing glance with it. Each man longed to show the other the door—it was such a bother to have someone calling when one had come to hear a confidence! They admired Jane's cleverness in concealing her annoyance at the presence of the other.

But they were interrupted by the arrival of Jim Winston and John Thorne. And still others came, each time Jane giving a little laugh of despair, which each man thought he understood, and that it was for him.

Jane managed to tell each one how sorry she was that their little chat was impossible—a society girl never had a moment to call her own! Mrs. Crawford found it an effort to sit quietly in her chair. She longed to take Jane aside, and demand an explanation of her corner in callers. She was too wise to think that it was by chance that all these men had taken it into their heads to call on Jane—they never came except on duty calls.

She was thankful to observe that Jane was acquitting herself with credit. She had a

gay word for everybody, and her repartee was positively brilliant.

Everyone seemed to be waiting for the others to depart. They gave Jane little glances that they understood how unfortunate it was; but they would have their talk yet!

Mr. Crawford, coming in, glanced round, startled.

So Jane was having another party, was she? Then his eye saw no feminine figures to relieve the scene, except Jane and her mother. He had just counted fourteen guests, when another man was ushered in.

The schoolboy and schoolgirl correspondence had ceased long since.

"How did you all know I was coming?" Forrest asked perplexed, as he looked round on all his old friends. He found it hard not to show his disappointment at not seeing Jane alone after so long a time.

Everyone laughed.

"This isn't a party organised in your honour," said Graison. "We all happened to call on Miss Crawford this evening. But it has been a great pleasure to all of us—if it hasn't proved embarrassing to the young

She was thankful to observe that Jane was acquitting herself with credit.

Jane gave a cry of surprise; everyone rose excitedly.

"Bob Forrest!" they cried. "Where did you come from?"

Jane grasped the back of a chair for support. She wondered if Fate wasn't playing her a queer prank to send Bob Forrest back that night of all others, after an absence of ten years. She and Bob had been chums away back in those careless days when she had been a tomboy without any society troubles. Then Bob had been taken abroad by his father, and since then he had done wonderful things, and his name of late had come to her only now and then in the papers.

lady to have so many of us at once. But a popular society girl like Miss Jane must be accustomed to this. It is another case of the bees and the honey, you know."

Graison was middle-aged, exceedingly rich, and tolerated because of his wealth. Jane always had detested him, but she was grateful to him for explaining the situation.

Forrest looked keenly at Jane. He evidently was greatly disappointed about something or other.

"At least," thought Jane, "he hasn't returned to find me playing wallflower." She was radiant.

Soon after this the callers began to depart.

If Jane had any doubts in her mind she discreetly kept them to herself.

Each gave Jane to understand that she would hear from him at once.

Forrest waited until the last man had gone. Then he came over and took Jane's hand.

"I had planned a different meeting, Jane," he said. It was a positive shock to find Jane, whom he had heard was not so much of a success as her sisters had been, a reigning belle with a host of admirers. He had wanted to see her for the sake of old times—to talk over the wild escapades of early days. Not a touch of sentiment had he ever had in connection with Jane; but for all that he resented the presence of anyone else in her vicinity.

Somehow, as they talked Forrest found that their old footing was gone for ever. Jane, living in the triumph of the moment, assumed new and charming little coquetries. Forrest went away from the house in quite a daze. And from that time on he was tormented by visions of Jane surrounded by dozens of worshippers.

The next day brought Jane a pile of letters of regret that no opportunity had been obtained to speak with her on the subject she had mentioned in her note. Would she please fix another date?

Then craftily Jane did so. Two, three, and four were told to come on the same evening. The same state of affairs repeated itself, though in fewer numbers. Each man was curious to know what Jane had to say to him—and to a man each was flattered at her singling him out for her confidence.

Jane's popularity began to be noised about. The girls looked at her with new interest, and the men seemed to be playing the old game "Follow the leader," for her life now, as young Billy Dykes said, was a continued picnic. Forrest for the next week tried to see her

alone. He was still desirous of talking over old times.

One morning he overtook her out for a brisk walk through the park.

"Am I never going to have a word with you?" he demanded.

"Why, you have had several," she retorted.

"I mean without a gang of hangers-on," he growled. "Why do you want to have a lot chasing you like that?"

"When one's in society——" quickly began Jane.

"Hang society!" declared Forrest. "I've had enough of that, and I had been led to believe that you didn't go in much for it. It is fearfully disappointing to come home and find Jane—jolly old Jane—a flirt. Can't you see you are leading them on—breaking their hearts—my heart——"

Jane interrupted him with a ringing laugh.

"Would you have preferred to find me a—a wallflower?" she demanded, with a side glance.

"Do you know," he confessed, "I thought you were—that is—I'd been told you didn't care much—— But, Jane, dear! won't you give me a bit of hope? I love you. Do you hear me, little Jane Crawford? I love you!"

Even in the happiness of the moment Jane couldn't resist saying: "But would you have cared if I had been a tame little wallflower whom no one noticed? Would you?"

"What a foolish question! Of course, I'd love you anyway! What earthly difference could that make?" he asked in surprise. "You are Jane, aren't you? That's enough for me."

If Jane had any doubts in her mind she discreetly kept them to herself. The phrase, "There's nothing succeeds like success," came into her mind as she ruminated.

By the time they reached her home, Jane was glowing with happiness. On the hall table she found several cards, which she turned over with studied indifference.

"You'll have to throw all of them over," said Forrest, with a proud air of ownership, "now that you are engaged."

"Can't I keep my friends?" she laughed. "You jealous old tyrant!" It was a delicious moment for Jane. A man was jealous of her!

"You'll get used to not having them all about," declared Forrest. "You see, you'll have me."

And Jane drew a sigh of relief.

Fifteen men are still curious to know what it was that Jane Crawford wanted to tell them.

THE GIRL OF MY HEART.

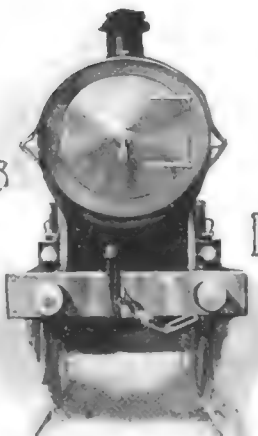
There are girls who can row,
And girls who can sew
(I know one who writes for the papers),
But *my* heart will be laid
At the feet of the maid
Who can give me boiled mutton, with capers.

I care little about
The girl who can spout
Whole pages of Byron and Shelley;
But give me the one—
Or else I'll have none—
Who makes all the jam and the jelly.

There are girls who can speak
Both Latin and Greek,
And quote Aristotle and Plato;
But who can compare—
Be she ever so fair—
With the girl who can cook a potato?

A. L. HARRIS.

STORIES OF THE RAILWAY.



ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING.

BY VICTOR L. WHITECHURCH.

Thorpe Hazell, the Hero of this Series, is an Eccentric Individual whose Hobbies are Vegetarianism, Physical Exercise, and the Solving of Railway Mysteries. His Successful Unravelling of another Knotty Problem Forms the Subject of this Story.

IX.—THE STOLEN NECKLACE.

THORPE HAZELL was dining at his club. They were accustomed to his eccentricities there, and hardly a member had looked up from his newspaper when he had divested himself of his coat, and gravely gone through his "digestive exercises" in a convenient corner before proceeding to the dining-room. Here preparation had been made, for he had told the head-waiter he was coming. A table was reserved, and on it stood a carafe of milk, a little loaf of brown bread, and a dish of his favourite biscuits. A bowl—he never would use a soup-plate—of lentil soup was soon put before him, and he commenced his meal.

"Hullo, Hazell," said a voice presently, as the speaker clapped him on the shoulders, "don't you overfeed yourself, old chap!"

"Oh, it's you, is it, Masters?" exclaimed Hazell, as he looked up. "I thought you were out of town."

"So I was till half-an-hour ago. I've just come up by the West-Northern, and I'm frantically hungry. Thought I'd come round for a meal at once before going to my chambers."

Hazell motioned him to take a seat at his table. The waiter came up and presented the menu. Hazell listened while his friend ordered dinner. Then he said:

"Oxtail soup is very heating. Whiting is a fish that ought to be cooked within two hours of catching. Curry is deadly for the liver. How you can digest Welsh rarebit is more than I can imagine, and alcohol in any form has been proved by the leading doctors to be a poison."

Frank Masters laughed heartily.

"Your life must be a misery to you, Hazell!"

"Not at all. I never suffer from indigestion."

"Neither do I."

"Not now, perhaps, but your old age will be a misery to you."

"How do you know yours won't, too? You haven't put *that* to the test with your system yet!"

Hazell shook his head sadly as the other fell to on his soup. There were few converts to be made at the club.

"Did you have a good run up to town?" asked Hazell presently.

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"Capital."

"Where did you come from?"

"Redminster."

"Ah, you took the express arriving in town at 7.28?"

"Yes, Mr. Bradshaw!"

"Mr. Bradshaw" was Thorpe Hazell's nickname at the club, and he rather rejoiced in it than otherwise. No man ever attempted the fag of looking at a railway guide when Hazell was near at hand.

"Was it in to time?"

"To the minute."

"Generally is. Did you notice whether a compound drew it?"

"What?"

"A compound locomotive."

"My dear fellow, I haven't the slightest idea what you mean. As long as I get to my journey's end I don't worry about the engine. Jolly good train, that express. No stop at all except at Wisden Junction, and I can't see the necessity for that."

"They take tickets there," replied Hazell.

"I know. But why the johnny can't collect 'em on the train instead of only just looking at 'em is one of those railway mysteries that you know more about than I do."

"They could collect them on the train, of course," replied Hazell, "or even at Redminster. But there's another reason why the train stops at Wisden—in case there are any passengers for South London."

"Then why do they disturb you on the train, and make you hunt in all your pockets just to see your ticket?"

"They don't," said Hazell, in blunt contradiction, as he helped himself liberally to boiled rice—for his second course had just arrived.

"But I tell you they do," replied his friend.

"Oh, well," said Hazell, "it must be something new. I travelled by that train a fortnight ago, and they didn't do it then. Oh—what an ass I am! Of course, I know what it was. A ticket inspector must have been on the train. The railway companies are not so foolish as you think, Masters, and they often catch fellows in that way."

The conversation took a general turn, and, after a bit, Hazell finished his meal and said good-night to his friend, with another gentle remonstrance against the savoury he was enjoying.

The next morning he had scarcely finished breakfast at his flat when there came a ring, and he heard his servant show someone into his study. The next moment he was looking at a visiting card.

"Miss St. John Mallaby."

When he went into the study he found himself confronted by a remarkably pretty young lady, whose face, however, was wearing a very anxious expression.

"I hope you don't mind my coming here, Mr. Hazell," she began, "but I think you've met my brother."

"Do sit down," he answered, "yes, of course I have."

"He told me about you, and what a clever railway detective you are, and I've come to you. I thought you might advise me."

Hazell smiled.

"I'm afraid I have a reputation that I don't deserve," he said. "I'm scarcely a railway detective, as you put it."

"Oh, but you *will* help me—please!" said the girl earnestly.

"Of course, I'll do anything I can for you, Miss Mallaby. But tell me what it's about?"

"I don't want anyone to know—I mean I want you to promise you won't tell anyone. I'm in great trouble. I've done something awfully wrong, and it's like a judgment on me."

"My dear young lady," replied Hazell gravely, "before you make a confidant of me are you sure that it is wise to do so?"

"Oh, yes—yes—yes. Because you may be able to help me. Please let me tell you."

"Very well, then," said Hazell encouragingly.

"Well, I've lost a diamond necklace!" she blurted out.

Hazell nodded and waited.

"I ought not to have worn it at all," she went on, "and that's the terrible part of it. It belongs to my aunt. I'm staying at her house in town. You see it's going to be mine one day—she has promised to give it to me when I come of age, and that's why I borrowed it."

"Suppose," said Hazell kindly, "you begin at the beginning and try to tell me exactly what has happened?"

"Yes, I will, as well as I can. My mother and I came up last week to stay with aunt for the season. It was then that she showed me the necklace. I'd often heard about it, for it's been in the family a long time. Well, last Monday aunt had to go away unexpectedly, owing to her brother being taken ill. She left her keys in charge of mother. On Tuesday I was to go down to Appledon to Sir Roland Hartingford's,

His daughter, who is a great friend of mine, came of age that day, and there was a ball at the house. Just before I started, the idea suddenly struck me that I would dearly love to wear the necklace at the dance. I know it was awfully wrong of me, but the temptation was a strong one, and I found myself saying that if aunt had been at home she would have lent me the diamonds. And then I yielded and took them."

"How did you get them?"

"It was very simple. I had to borrow my mother's keys for something, and she gave me her chatelaine. In it were the other keys. Almost before I realised what I had done, I had gone into my aunt's room and unlocked the safe which is fixed there. The necklace was in a small leather case. I took it out, locked up the safe again, and gave my mother back the keys."

"Did you tell her what you had done?"

"No. She does not know even yet."

"Where did you put the necklace?"

"In my dressing-case, which contains my own jewellery and which never leaves me when I travel. Well, I went down to Appledon with my maid and wore the diamonds at the ball. It was on the return journey—yesterday—that I lost them."

"In the train?"

"Yes. That's why I came to you, Mr. Hazell. At least, I think it *must* have been in the train—and yet—I hardly know what to say. It is all so terrible."

"Well, you must try to tell me."

The girl thought for a moment.

"Appledon is on a branch line," she said, "and you join the main line at Redminster."

"Quite so," said Hazell indulgently.

"It must have happened in the main line train, because after we had got in I wanted something from my case and unlocked it. The necklace was there then; I'm positive of that."

"What train was it?"

"The 5.40 express from Redminster. I was travelling with my maid in a first-class compartment. It was a corridor train."

"Was anyone else in the carriage with you?"

The girl hesitated and blushed slightly. Then she said:

"One of the guests at Appledon—Mr. Kestron—was coming up to town by the same train, and he travelled with me."

"The Honourable George Kestron?"

"Yes."

"I know him slightly," replied Hazell, remembering that a rumour was abroad to the effect that this same Kestron was rather hard up—had borrowed money, so it was said.

Miss Mallaby noticed a certain tone in Hazell's voice as he replied.

"No—*no!*" she exclaimed, "I *can't* suspect him."

"Had you, then?" asked Hazell.

"The thought *would* come into my head. It was partly for that reason that I did not go to the police. Oh, Mr. Hazell, I don't know *what* to think."

"Well, go on with your story, please. Perhaps you will tell me how you were seated in the carriage?"

She explained that she was at first seated in the corner next to the corridor with her back to the engine, and Kestron was opposite. Her maid was on her left by the window, with the dressing-case, covered over by a rug, between them. After a while, Kestron had suggested changing places, as she had said something about travelling with her back to the engine. She was careful to move the dressing-case over to her side. Afterwards Kestron had changed his place again and had sat next to her until Wisden Junction was reached—the dressing-case being between them.

"Have you known Mr. Kestron long?" asked Hazell.

"I had only met him a few times before the ball. We danced a good deal together that night, but I had not known him very long—that was why I asked my maid to stay in the compartment."

"How came he to travel with you?"

"He had asked me the night before what train I was going by."

"I see. Well, when did you miss the necklace?"

She told him it was after the train had left Wisden Junction. She put her hand into the outside pocket of the case, where she kept her purse, and discovered, to her horror, that a long slit had been cut through the inner side. She unlocked the case, and the necklace was missing. Kestron had got out at Wisden, having to take a train from there on business before he went home that night.

"Do you know his address?" asked Hazell.

"Lancaster Crescent—number eight, I think."

Having discovered the loss of the jewels, she was terribly upset, and even asked her maid if she had taken them. The latter was indignant, and wanted to be searched on the spot. They looked everywhere in the compartment. It was still broad daylight, and

she was certain that neither of them had left the compartment between Redminster and Wisden.

"Did anyone else come in?"

"No—even the ticket-collector only opened the door, and stood half outside when he asked to see our tickets."

Hazell suddenly remembered that the friend with whom he had been dining on the previous evening had travelled by the same train. He thought for a minute, and then asked her to tell him how the three were seated when the ticket-collector came, and who gave him the tickets.

"Mr. Kestron was next to me—it was after he had changed places the second time. I handed his ticket to the man, who glanced at it and returned it. My maid had both our tickets — she always sees to that—and she showed them to him."

"My maid had both our tickets . . . and she showed them to him."

"But as she was near the window, how did she do it?"

"Why," exclaimed the girl rather petulantly, "she naturally moved across to him."

"I see," said Hazell thoughtfully. "The corridor, of course, was on the *left* as you faced the engine. Can you remember whether the ticket-collector came from the front or back of the train, and whereabouts your carriage was in the train?"

"About the middle. The collector came from the front, but he had passed along the corridor just before."

"Only *just* before?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Well, I think you've told me all I want to know. It's a troublesome case. By the way, what happened when you arrived at the terminus?"

"My aunt's brougham was there to meet me, and the footman got my luggage from the van. My maid and I went straight to the brougham. I was foolish, perhaps, but I didn't tell anyone what had happened. I dreaded the police knowing. I felt like a thief myself. And—and——"

"You suspected Mr. Kestron, I suppose?"

Her eyes fell before his gaze, and she nodded slowly.

"I don't wonder," said Hazell.

"But—but—do you think he took it, Mr. Hazell? I don't know what to do about it—and my aunt comes home this evening. I shall have to tell her. If—if—he took it, are you going to try to find out?"

"I shall have to keep you in suspense for a little while, Miss Mallaby," said Thorpe

Hazell. "I want you to go straight home and say nothing about this visit. Please give me your address, and I will call as soon as possible—to-day, I expect. I can't promise anything, but there is just a chance of getting on the track."

She thanked him. He put on his hat and saw her to the door, where her cab was waiting. Then he hailed a hansom and directed the driver to take him quickly to the terminus of the West-Northern Railway.

"Wait," he said as he got out. "I shall want you again directly."

He made his way to the office of the traffic-manager, whom he knew.

"I want some information," he said. "Will you tell me if there was a ticket-collector or inspector on the 5.40 p.m. express from Redminster last evening?"

"Another mystery?" asked the official.

"Yes—but the chances are against a solution, I'm afraid."

The manager rang for a clerk and gave some orders. In ten minutes' time the report was brought in. *No ticket inspector or collector had been on the train.*

"That settles it," cried Hazell. "I'd advise you to look after your old uniforms, Mr. Street. Good-morning."

His next move was to drive to Frank Masters, whom he found busy with a pile of briefs in front of him.

"Sorry to disturb you," said Hazell, "but the matter is of importance. It's about your railway journey last night. That ticket-collecting incident is the clue to a mystery. Can you remember what the fellow was like?"

"Yes. A man with a black beard and moustache, and rather a gruff voice."

"After he'd looked at your ticket did he go back along the corridor?"

"No. He passed first, and asked for tickets coming back."

"From the front of the train—yes, I know. Now, whereabouts in the carriage were you—which compartment were you in, I mean?"

"The last but two—a first-class."

"Last but two from the engine?"

"Yes."

"H'm. I wish I knew about those two compartments behind you."

"I can tell you."

"Good!" ejaculated Hazell. "How?"

"There was a fellow in my compartment who lit an Egyptian cigarette. I can't stand the smell of 'em, so I went out."

"After the tickets were looked at?"

"Yes—some ten minutes later—just before we got to Wisden. The next compartment was evidently reserved for ladies, so I avoided it; the last was a second class, but I didn't mind that. There was only one man in it.

"Oh, that's grand," cried Hazell, with great glee. "I'll have a drink on the strength of it."

And he pulled out his milk flask.

"What was he like?" he went on.

"A clean-shaven fellow, with the exception of slight whiskers. He was reading a paper when I went in."

"That's the man I want," said Hazell. "You see, I happen to know that the doors at the ends of the coaches on this train were locked, the key being with the guard. So it was impossible that anyone could get through to the next coach. If only I could find out where that man is now!"

Masters wheeled round his chair suddenly.

"Will you tell me why you want to know?" he asked.

"I can't, my dear chap."

"Will you assure me, then, that no harm will come of it if I can give you a clue?"

"On the other hand, you will be doing a very great service in the cause of justice."

"Very well, then. I took a hansom straight to the club when I arrived at the terminus. And I happened to notice that my travelling companion took the next on the rank. He had a large Gladstone and a smaller bag with him."

"That settles it. I'm off," exclaimed Hazell.

In half-an-hour's time he was back at the terminus, in consultation with the cab inspector, who keeps watch at the station gates.

"I want the number and destination of the hansom that followed immediately after the one bound for the Avenue Club last evening—from the 7.35 from Redminster."

He knew, of course, that every cabman has to shout out his destination to the inspector as he passes the little office at the gate. The man consulted his book.

"Number 28,533. Destination, Eight, Lancaster Crescent."

Thorpe Hazell stood as one stunned.

"Kestron's address!" he muttered to himself. "The girl must have been right, after all. It's pretty bad!"

"I think you'll find the cab on the rank now, sir," went on the inspector.

It was there, and in answer to his inquiries the driver informed Hazell that the address was quite correct, and that his fare had certainly gone in at number eight.

"I'm sorry for her," said Hazell to himself, as he told his own cabman to drive him there; "but at least I can try to bluff him. Still, it's very strange. There's a hitch in my reasoning somewhere. Except, of course, this man must have been his tool. *I* can't make it out."

He rang the bell of number eight, and a servant opened the door.

"Is Mr. Kestron in?"

"No, sir; he went out half-an-hour ago."

Thorpe Hazell paused, then he said:

"Ah, he has returned from the country, then?"

"Yes, sir. He came back late last night."

"About eight?"

"No, sir; not till after ten."

"Oh," said Hazell nonchalantly, "I thought he returned by the train arriving at about half-past seven and drove straight home."

"No, sir; the valet came back with the luggage then, but Mr. Kestron arrived later."

Instantly the solution flashed across his mind. Producing half-a-sovereign, he said to the girl:

"I want to see his valet."

The girl looked at him doubtfully, and hesitated.

"I am a friend of your master," said Hazell quietly.

Then the bribe acted.

In a couple of minutes the valet came into the room where Hazell had been shown. Without a word the latter walked to the door and locked it. Then he turned upon the man.

"Do you find ticket-collecting a paying business?" he asked.

The other turned very pale.

"I don't understand," he said.

"I can prove that you were amusing yourself asking for tickets on the express from Redminster last night. I have all the details."

The man was thoroughly taken aback. At first he denied everything, but something in Hazell's quiet manner was too much for him.

"Well," he said sullenly, "and if I was? It was a harmless enough joke. You're from the railway company, I suppose?"

Hazell ignored the question.

"I want that diamond necklace that was handed to you by Miss Mallaby's maid," he said, "sharp!"

The man gave a bound forward.

"It was a clever scheme you both hatched out at Appledon—no!" he cried, "I know exactly what happened. If you attempt any nonsense you're done for, my man." Then he went on to explain that if the necklace were restored quietly nothing more would be said.

"If you attempt any nonsense you're done for, my man."

"Not for your sake, you know," he added grimly, "but because it's best to hush it up. If you refuse, I'll open the window and tell my cabman to fetch the police. These are my conditions. You give me the necklace, and clear out of here before your master returns. For I fancy *he'll* know about this one of these days."

"Who are you?" blurted out the man.

"My name's Thorpe Hazell—if that's any use to you, and this isn't the first little affair of the railway I've solved."

"I've heard of you," said the valet. "Were you on the train?"

"No. Now then—that necklace, please."

"I'll—I'll go and get it."

"Then I'll come with you."

He looked at Hazell for a moment, then, putting his hand in the inner pocket of his coat he drew out a small case, and handed it over to Hazell with a curse. The latter opened it, and saw the diamonds were intact.

"Thanks," he said. "I've two questions to ask you—out of mere curiosity. Why did you trouble to ask for tickets in every compartment of that carriage?"

"I thought it might allay suspicion if the alarm were given before the end of the journey. The other passengers would—"

"Oh, it is very weak!" interrupted Hazell. "How should you have changed into uniform if there had been anyone else in your compartment?"

"There was the lavatory."

"I see. Good-morning. You may think yourself very lucky, my friend."

In an hour's time the necklace was in the hands of Miss St. John Mallaby, who was profuse in her expressions of relief and gratitude.

"And you are sure that——"

"That Mr. Kestron had nothing to do with it? Absolutely. Now, please ring for your maid."

The latter came in. Hazell held the necklace in his hands.

"Your mistress thinks you had better take yourself off at once," he said. "Mr. Kestron's valet is also out of a situation. Did you use your scissors or a knife to slit open that dressing-case under cover of the rug?"

She stood for half-a-minute gasping for breath. Then she left the room without a word.

"It has been an interesting case, Miss Mallaby," remarked Hazell, "and I am glad to think that the last of my little investigations of railway mysteries has cleared a good man of suspicion and ended happily."

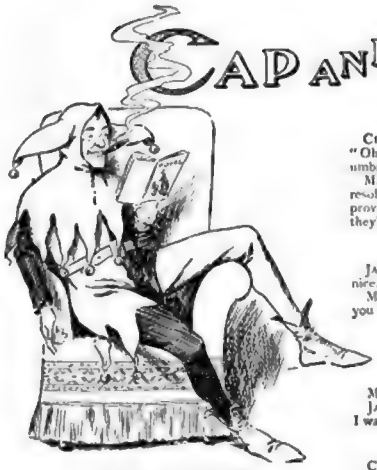
"Your last investigation?"

"I think so—at all events for a time. I have found my amateur adventures rather tell on my health. They interfere, at times, with one's regular digestion. So I am going to put myself out of the way of temptation. I have just bought a little house at Hillswick, in the Shetland Isles. I shall take my library there and lead a quiet life for a year or two. And I shall feel absolutely certain that the milk is pure. One hardly knows what one is drinking in London. Good-bye!"

She stood for half-a-minute gasping for breath. Then she left the room without a word.

At the present moment Thorpe Hazell is living in his Shetland home, far away from the sound of an engine whistle, for the islands boast of no railways. The crofters are getting quite accustomed to seeing their neighbour perform his regular "exercises" in the open air in front of his house—for that is his latest fad—and he has a couple of his own cows, which he invariably milks himself. He says that he was never better in his life. His only regret is that he cannot grow his own lentils—the climate will not serve!

CAP AND BELLS



A SAD REFLECTION.

PLUGWINCH: "Good idea, waiter, to serve capers with this alleged lamb."

WAITER: "Yes, sir, most gentlemen likes 'em."

PLUGWINCH: "No, it isn't that, but I was just thinking that these are the only capers the poor creature has had for the last ten years."

* * * * *

THEN AND NOW.

We used to go to Sunday-school together;
At first I didn't know her, and was shy,
Until one day, in very rainy weather,
I rashly lent my "gamp," to keep her dry.
How sweetly still the mem'ry seems to linger,
Of what firm friends we grew! To tell the truth,
She used to twist me round her little finger,
And I enjoyed the process. Such is youth!

The years have come and gone, and we are married.
Her plan of action is effectual still;
For since those happy days, she has but varied
The instrument with which she works her will.
I stand, a warning to the man who chooses
A wilful woman's husband to become . . .
It's not her little finger now she uses,
She keeps me firmly underneath her thumb!

Sydney J. Tayler.

* * * * *

TWENTIETH CENTURY COOKERY.

MR. G. ORMANDIZER (struggling to carve the first turkey his wife ever cooked): "I say, Mary, the bones in this bird are thicker than a whale's—just hear the knife on them."

MRS. G. ORMANDIZER (almost crying with anxiety): "You must be against the shells, John."

MR. G. ORMANDIZER: "Shells?"

MRS. G. ORMANDIZER: "Yes, John; don't you remember that you asked me to stuff the turkey with oysters?"

TRUE TO HIS PRINCIPLES.

CLERK (to his employer just leaving the office): "Oh, Mr. System, haven't you forgotten your umbrella? It's raining."

MR. SYSTEM: "Can't help it. I've made a resolution to have one here and one at home, to provide for all emergencies. Now, if I take this they'll both be at home."

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NOT DOING IT JUSTICE.

JACK: "Oh, mother, I do love cake! It's awful nice."

MOTHER (reprovingly): "You should not say you 'love' cake—say 'like.' Do not say 'awful'—say 'very.' Do not say 'nice'—say 'good.' And, by the way, the word 'oh' should be omitted. Now, my dear, repeat the sentence correctly."

JACK: "I like cake, it's very good."

MOTHER: "That's better."

JACK (with an air of disgust): "It sounds as if I was only talking 'bout bread."

* * * * *

NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

CLARA: "Now I'm all ready for the ball. How do I look, Jim?"

JIM: "You remind me of a Sioux in his war-paint."

CLARA: "Oh, you nasty thing, I——"

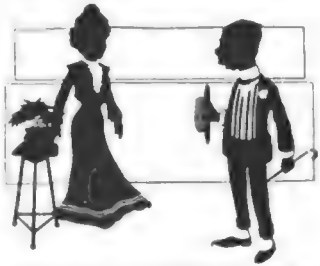
JIM: "Don't cry, darling. I simply meant you were dressed to kill."

* * * * *

TAKEN AT HIS WORD.

LONG-HAIRED VISITOR (entering timidly): "I have here a little poem written on 'Snow,' and——"

EDITOR (interrupting hastily): "Written on snow! We can't use anything that isn't written on paper. Sorry. Turn the knob to the right. That's it. Good morning!"



He: "They say, dear, that people who live together get to look alike."
She: "Then you must consider my refusal as final."

THE LAST STRAW.

"But, Freddy, I don't see that you need be so heart-broken because Mabel has jilted you."

"It isn't the jilting I mind, but she returned the ring in a parcel marked 'Glass with care.'"

• • •

Carpet is sold by the yard and worn by the foot.

• • •

ONLY NATURAL.

MISTRESS: "Do you call this sponge cake? Why, it's as hard as it can be."

NEW COOK: "Yes, mum, that's the way a sponge is before it's wet. Soak it in your tea, mum."

• • •

SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY.

MRS. M'CAUBE: "Here is a notice saying that if the bill is not paid the gas will be cut off."

MR. M'CAUBE: "Let 'em cut it off. Who cares?"

MRS. M'CAUBE: "But what shall we do?"

MR. M'CAUBE: "Put in electric light."

MRS. M'CAUBE: "But in time the bills for that will come in."

MR. M'CAUBE: "Oh, well, perhaps something else will be invented by that time."

• • •

EXPECTING TOO MUCH.

OLD GENTLEMAN: "I shall report you, young man. Why didn't you stop your 'bus before? Here I have been running after it for nearly thirty yards."

CONDUCTOR: "All right, guv'nor. I'm sorry, but I ain't like a pertater, with eyes all over."

• • •

A NATURAL QUESTION.

"You have looked on my face for the last time," he resolutely declared, as he put on his hat.

"What are you going to do," she cried, "grow a beard?"

• • •

NOT ONLY THE GATE.

"Your husband painted the front gate himself, didn't he?"

"Well, yes, I suppose he got some of the paint on the gate; but you wouldn't think so if you could see his clothes."

1. "Here's a funny-looking tree."

2. "Well! any shade is welcome."

3. The Ostrich: "Well, I never! Here, get out, impudence!"

THE REASON.

"Darling," said she, "do you love me as much as ever?"

"Yes, dearie," said he, with his face buried in his newspaper.

That ought to have satisfied her, but she had to ask "Why?"

"Oh, I dunno. Habit, I suppose."

• • •

SHE DID IT HERSELF.

HUNKER: "What prompted you to ask Miss Giddey to be your wife?"

SPATTS: "I think Miss Giddey herself prompted me more than anybody else."

• • •

A RAPID ADVANCE.

IMPECUNIOUS BUT ENTHUSIASTIC COLLECTOR: "Let me see, what is the price of that picture?"

ART DEALER: "Eighteen hundred pounds, madam."

COLLECTOR: "Eighteen hundred pounds! Why, this is the third time I have asked the price of that painting within three days, and it is a hundred pounds more each time I ask!"

ART DEALER: "Yes; but madam must remember it is an antique, and that it grows older every day."

• • •

SHE NEEDN'T TROUBLE.

MISTRESS (midnight): "I don't intend to come downstairs to let you in at this time of night, again."

NEW GIRL (reassuringly): "You won't have to, mum. One of my friends took an impression of your lock, and he's making a nice key for me."

• • •

NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

A belated traveller arrived at the door of a country inn, and after much difficulty succeeded in rousing the proprietor sufficiently for him to put his head out of the window and ask what was wanted.

"I want to stop here all night."

"Well, you can do so!" was the answer, and the irate innkeeper slammed the window down with great force and went back to bed.

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.

Fair Passenger: "Oh, Captain, won't you please turn the ship round and take me back home?"
Captain: "Impossible, madam."
Fair Passenger: "But you must, Captain. I've just received a Marconi message saying that Fido is very ill!"

* * * * *

A FRIENDLY SUGGESTION.

"I'm afraid I'll have to move again," said Smith, the other morning as he got on a 'bus.

"What's the trouble now?" inquired his friend Jones.

"The kitchen chimney smokes dreadfully," replied Smith, "and I'm unable to stop it."

"I'll tell you what to do," said Jones. "Give it one of those cigars like you gave me yesterday, and ten to one it will stop smoking of its own accord."

* * * * *

INDEPENDENCE.

Once mamma said to her little daughter: "I don't see where you got your red hair; you don't get it from your father, and you certainly don't get it from me."

"Well, can't I start something, mamma?" asked Dorothy, in an aggrieved tone.

* * * * *

A GENEROUS OFFER.

EDITOR: "Well, madam, if the story suits me, I will pay you three guineas for it."

YOUNG LADY AUTHOR (pensively): "Oh, come now, buy it without reading it, and I'll let you have it for ten shillings."

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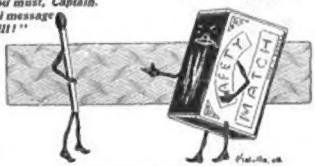
METHOD IN HIS MADNESS.

"I wonder why Kaleacre puts all his savings under his pillow every night?"

"I suppose he wants people to know that he has money enough to retire on."



POINTS OF SIMILARITY.

Matchbox. "Here's a conundrum for you. Why is that cheap oil lamp in the kitchen like the boss?"
Match: "I give it up."
Matchbox: "Because it smokes a lot, and often goes out at night. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

QUITE PURE.

MISTRESS: "This water has a queer taste."

CAREFUL SERVANT (who has heard much scientific conversation): "It's all right, mum. There ain't a live germ in it, mum; I run it through the sausage machine before I brought it in."

* * * * *

THE REWARD OF KINDNESS.

"Can you not reach the bell, my little man?"
The worthy Bishop said,
"I'm glad to do a kindness when I can;
I'll ring for you instead."

He seized the bell and gave a hearty peal.
The boy stood by to see;
Then, with a grin, and turning on his heel,
"Now, sir, let's run!" said he.

* * * * *

HER AUTHORITY.

HE: "This pudding is something fearful; it tastes absolutely horrible."

SHE: "It is impossible, for the cookery book says it tastes delicious."

* * * * *

WANTED IN EVERY HOME.

When he reached home he opened the package he was carrying and displayed a number of placards, some of which read "For Show," and others "For Use."

"There!" he exclaimed triumphantly, "I flatter myself I have solved the problem."

"Solved the problem?" she repeated. "What problem? What in the world do you intend to do with those cards?"

"I am going to give them to you," he replied, "so that you can put them on the various cushions scattered about the house."

Very Stout Gentleman (to Street Hawker): "Here, my man, there's sixpence for you. Just look and tell me if my boots want polishing."

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QUITE ORIGINAL.

LADY NOVELIST: "I'd like to have my heroine do something absolutely unique."

FRIEND: "Yes? Why don't you make her faint when there is no one looking?"

* * * *

MUCH OFTENER.

SILICUS: Do you believe that clothes make the woman?"

CYNICUS: "More often than the woman makes the clothes."

* * * *

ONLY THE DOCTORS.

VISITOR: "How is my dear friend to-day?"

NURSE: "He is very low indeed."

VISITOR: "I should very much like to see him, if only for a moment."

NURSE: "That would be impossible. He is not permitted to see anyone. The doctors say his very life depends on his having absolute rest and quiet."

VISITOR: "What is that hubbub going on in the room adjoining the sick chamber?"

NURSE: "Oh, that's only the doctors consulting. You see, this is a very unusual case, and they are having a long and heated discussion over it."

* * *

SHE DEFENDS HIM.

MAMMA: "I'm glad you didn't accept Charley Litewate. He's a brainless fop."

SHE: "Oh, I don't know, mamma. His opinion of me proves that he is not entirely lacking in judgment."

Borrower: "You are very kind to lend me this sovereign. I feel as if I can never repay you."
Lender: "Eh? Why on earth didn't you say that at first?"

Lady: "Are you engaged?"
Cabman: "No, Miss. Are you?"

WOMAN'S WAY.

MCJIGGER: "That's a funny thing."

THINGUMBOB: "What is?"

MCJIGGER: "Miss Passey was an old maid before she married, and now that her husband is dead she has become a young widow."

* * *

SHE HAD REASONS.

LUCIE: "I always give the prettiest embroidered things I do to my mother."

MARIE: "That is kind and thoughtful of you."

LUCIE: "Yes. Then I can borrow them, you know."

* * *

TOO LATE.

PROFESSOR: "What is the dose of croton oil?"

STUDENT (in a hurry): "One teaspoonful."

The professor makes no comment, but the student feels he has not answered correctly.

STUDENT (fifteen minutes later): "I want to change my answer to that question."

PROFESSOR (looking at his watch): "It is too late. Your patient has been dead fourteen minutes."

* * * *

A FAMILY COOLNESS.

HE: "Why are you so cold to me?"

SHE: "Because you don't buy me a sealskin coat."

* * *

BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

FAMILY FRIEND: "Which do you love most, your papa or your mamma?"

LITTLE CHARLIE: "I love papa most."

CHARLIE'S MOTHER: "Why, Charlie, I am surprised at you. I thought you loved me most!"

CHARLIE: "Can't help it, mamma; we men have to hold together."

OVERHEARD AT THE SIDEBOARD.

First Dish: "What's that cup's name?"
Second Dish: "I don't know his name, but he's a very big 'pot.'"

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CONFERRING A BENEFIT.

When visiting the sick poor it is as well to offer them something besides sympathy. If the visit is brought to a close by a small gift of some sort, they are much more likely to be favourably impressed.

A stylishly-dressed lady sat for two hours in the bedroom of a sick old woman, asking her many questions about her complaint, and managing, in her short-sighted zeal, to worry the poor invalid to the verge of exhaustion. When she finally rose to depart, her daintily-gloved hand strayed to her pocket.

"And now, my good woman," she said, smiling sweetly, "I wonder if you could eat a few oysters?"

The invalid eagerly expressed willingness to try.

"Then get yourself some, dear," said my lady, placing a card on the bed. "If you send to the address on that card, and mention my name, they will sell you oysters at a halfpenny a dozen less than any other shop in town."

* * * * *

VERACITY.

"How do you understand the phrase 'an impressionist picture'?" asked the country cousin of the City cynic, as they stood in the art gallery.

"Why, 'an impressionist picture' is one that leaves on your mind the impression that it is a picture of a cow, and the impression lingers until you look at the catalogue and read that it is a picture of a water-spaniel."

* * *

A SMART CHILD.

"Mamma," said six-year-old Harry, "when I have any sweets I always like to share them with you."

"I'm glad to know you are not selfish, Harry," replied his mother. "But why do you like to share them with me instead of with anyone else?"

"'Cause," answered the little diplomatist, "you always take them, thank me, and then give them back."

* * * * *

THE SHADOW OF THE PAST.

She laid her face against her mother's breast and sobbed.

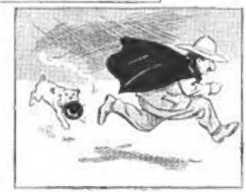
"My poor child, what is it?" the elder lady asked. "Has Reginald been cruel to you?"

"No, mamma," the bride replied, "it is not that. It is all on account of a terrible discovery. I——"

"Ah," the fond mother exclaimed, "then he did not tell you before it was too late! Oh, my poor child! Oh, the monster! There's a dark page in his life! Ah, how can a man be so base? How——"

"He found the photograph of me sitting in a basin," the stricken one interrupted, "that you had taken for a baby food advertisement!"

Then they sat there dumb with grief.



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ANYTHING FOR EXACTITUDE.

MISTRESS (to servant): "Be careful not to spill any soup on the ladies' laps."

BIDDY (new to service): "Yes, mum; where shall I spill it?"

SCEPTICAL.

BENEVOLENT OLD GENT (to fellow passenger): "How fast we travel! But, ah, young man, have you ever thought of the flight of time? Think of the fleeting hours of youth, the golden days that swiftly pass away. Have you ever counted the minutes——"

BATTERSBY (unregenerate and suspicious): "What are you trying to do? Sell me a watch?"

* * *

HARDLY SUFFICIENT.

"Has my daughter, sir," demanded the stern father, "ever given you reason to think she would listen to a proposal of marriage from you?"

"Well," said the young man, twirling his hat in his hand in an embarrassed manner, "except that she calls me 'darling' and always kisses me when I bid her good-night, I can't say that she has."

THE ANARCHIST AND HIS TOO FAITHFUL DOG.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

BABES IN THE WOOD.

HERE's a story that came to my ears when I was travelling last year in Canada. I want you all to read it carefully through, and then study the paragraph that follows.

Two Canadian boys went out in the backwoods with their uncle for a month's holiday. They lived mostly under canvas, and tramped about through pathless woods where no men are to be met with from year's end to year's end. For food they relied on their rods and guns and a sack of flour, which they had brought with them into the wilderness.

All went merrily until one day the uncle, who had gone out on a shooting expedition alone, failed to turn up in the evening. Night passed, the morning dawned, and still no uncle; the day passed, the night, the day and the night again, and, finally, it was borne in on the boys that their uncle had met with some accident in the depths of the forest. And on the third morning they found his dead body about a quarter of a mile away from the encampment. He had been killed in an encounter with a wounded bear. Imagine their position. Absolutely alone and lost, for it was impossible for them to think of finding their way to the nearest settlement, as their uncle's compass had been smashed in his death-struggle.

But these boys were Canadians—born settlers, courageous, and self-reliant. I think the average boy would have died of fear and helplessness. They, on the other hand, after burying their uncle, set about building themselves a rude hut and getting their food. They shot and fished enough to keep themselves plentifully in food for over ten weeks, when some rangers, who had been dispatched in search of them, brought them back to civilisation. But for the terrible tragedy which had ended their uncle's life, they said they had never had a better time.

Now we come to my reason for telling you this story.

HEROES AND HEROINES.

I want all boys and girls who have done anything at all out of the ordinary to send me a tale of their special feat. They may have saved someone's life, they may have made some extraordinary record at football or cricket. I set no limit whatever to the subject of their stories. All I want are guarantees as to their authenticity and names and addresses of the heroes or heroines. For any narrative which I consider interesting enough for publication I shall be pleased to pay.

A BUDDING KIPLING.

I have often told you of my juvenile contributors. Well, here's a story by a five-year-old boy:

THE HAPPY MAN: A STORY FOR GROWN-UPS.

Once upon a time there was a man, and he went for a walk, and he went a very, very long way, and he got away from his house, and he thought he had gone far enough, and he started back again, and when he got back to his house he had some tea, and when he had finished he went for another walk, just when he was turning back to go home he saw a frog in a pool, and the frog hopped out near the man's feet, and the man picked it up and carried it home and put it in a pool in his own garden, then he had his supper and went to bed. Next morning he got up and had breakfast, then he went out in the garden to see if the frog was still in the pool, the frog was still in the pool and it was eating weeds, then he thought he would go out for another walk, and he did go, and he caught a fish in a pond and took it home and put it in his pool with the frog; then he had dinner, and then he went out for a walk, for eight miles, and he saw a little bird and it was a yellow-hammer, and he found some little poles and made a cage with them, he had got a hammer and some little nails in his pocket, then he caught the bird with a net he had brought out with him, and he put the bird in the cage and carried it home, then he knocked a nail on a pole near his pool, and tied the cage to it, then it was teatime, when he had finished his tea he went out for another little walk, his pool was wanting some more water in it, and he took a can with him and fetched some water from a pond and put in his pool, the frog the fish and the bird lived very happy at the pool.

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